

Afterburner

NEWS FOR USAF RETIRED PERSONNEL

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Thousands apply for combat related special compensation

Nearly 6,000 Air Force retirees have filed Combat Related Special Compensation applications since guidance was announced in late May.

Combat related special compensation allows some disabled military retirees to collect payments for both their military service and their service-related disability as provided by the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act.

As of Aug. 18, a total of 5,860 appli-

cations had been received by the Physical Disability Division in the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas. Col. Larry N. Van Buren, the division chief, said 302 have been approved and 387 disapproved. Some military retirees are already receiving the extra money.

The number of people qualifying may be larger than the term "combat related" implies.

According to the legislation, a veteran with "combat-related" disabilities is any 20-year military retiree receiving retired pay, with at least a 60 percent combined VA disability rating and: his or her injuries are a "direct result" of armed conflict; are a result of "haz-

ardous" military service; were incurred while serving in "conditions simulating war;" or were incurred "through an instrumentality of war."

Automatic qualifiers include any military retiree with at least 20 years of service who is rated as at least 10 percent disabled by the VA for injuries related to the award of a Purple Heart, officials said.

To qualify, retired Reserve applicants must have retired with 7,200 or more total points.

Payments are retroactive to June 1 for those whose disability occurred before that date. Those who apply and

(See Special on page 5)

In this Afterburner

How to give the perfect gift
page 2

DFAS pushes myPay
page 3

NPRC initiates online
records request, **page 5**

Next BRAC looms, **page 6**

Prostate cancer study ends
at WHMC, **page 7**

New Shades of Green re-
opening set, **page 8**

Club drive starts, prizes
awarded, **page 8**

Exchange consolidation plan
on horizon, **page 9**

Do not call registry attracts
millions, **page 11**

Long term care enrollment
continues, **page 11**

Retiree Council to fill 3 area vacancies

Three retired Air Force members will be named later this year to fill vacancies on the Air Force Retiree Council. Although those selected will not become members until July 1, 2004, the new area representatives will attend the May 2004 council meeting as observers.

Following is a list of the council areas where vacancies will occur and the name of the current representative:

Area III (Arizona and New Mexico)-
Brigadier General Keith B. Connolly;

Area VI (Texas)-Colonel Donald W.
Hobart;

Area XIII (Connecticut, Maine,
Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New
Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania,
Rhode Island and Vermont)-Chief
Master Sergeant Bud Hassler.

Members who reside in an area
where there will be a council vacancy

are encouraged to visit the Retiree Activities Office at the nearest Air Force base to review the application procedures in the governing directive, Air Force Instruction 36-3106, Retiree Activities Program.

Interested Air Force retirees may apply only for the vacancy in the area of their residency. Candidates, officer or enlisted, should apply to the commander of the nearest installation.

Since commanders must screen and forward one nomination to the council co-chairmen by Nov. 7, interested retirees should apply not later than Oct. 15. The Council co-chairmen will accept nominations only from installation commanders.

While all Air Force retirees will be considered, those who have shown involvement in retiree programs in the past will be more favorably considered.

Areas of responsibility and interest are spelled out in the previously mentioned directive.

The gift of life!

Almost on a daily basis, I get calls from people wanting to know the best way to support our efforts in Iraq, the War on Terrorism, or just help military members in general. Certainly, there are many ways of assisting, but I've discovered the perfect way for me. Maybe you'll consider it.

Like you, I've been taught that it's better to give than receive, but when the word went out recently that there were burn victims at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, who were in desperate need of my blood, I couldn't help but think about those on the receiving end of this particular gift. For me, it's a "feel good" thing of being able to help. To the recipient, it may have been the difference between life and death.

Why were they desperate for my blood? I'm either fortunate or unfortunate in that I'm O-Negative. Fortunate, because I can donate blood to just about anybody. They can use my blood to stabilize patients during emergency situations before that patient's blood type is known. If you're O-Negative, think about it. Your blood could sort of be the first line of defense for that burn patient, a crew member whose plane went down, for a young airman injured in an automobile accident or some young soldier wounded in Iraq.

On the other hand, I'm unfortunate because us O-Negative types, when we need blood, can only be transfused with O-Negative blood. That's a little frightening in that O-Negative blood only makes up about 7 percent of the

Editor's Notebook

By
Bill
Turner



total donor population. Those of us in that small group really need to donate often to ensure there is some on hand.

The O blood (positive and negative) continues to be in high demand. O-Negative is sent to forward areas because it can be given to anyone. Also, O-Positive blood can be used at the doctor's discretion in an emergency.

Now, please don't take this to mean that O blood is all that is needed. Not true by a long shot.

Once tests can be run to confirm their blood type, patients need to receive blood that matches their specific type. So, there definitely is a great demand for all blood at all times in all areas.

"Though many medical advances are helping save lives in the field, nothing can take the place of blood," according to the former director of the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP), Col. G. Michael Fitzpatrick. "Bandages with clotting agents can help slow bleeding, but once blood is lost it must be replaced."

After 9-11, Americans stepped up and donated blood with a passion and they did the same after the initial thrust of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but since then potential donors apparently have felt that the need for blood has gone away. Not true according to ASBP officials. The ASBP needs continuing donor support to make sure the men and women who serve receive the best care possible.

ASBP blood centers collect blood from the military community, for the military community. "The program depends on donors who give as often as they can to provide blood products for sick and injured," said Colonel Fitzpatrick. "Many of those who gave routinely are now deployed or are temporarily unable to give because they were recently in malaria-endemic areas. We need others to step up and fill that void."

Colonel Fitzpatrick's remarks about collecting from the military community for the military community stands out in my mind. I thought it made no difference where you donate. Again, not true.

If you're near an ASBP blood center (see list on page 9), located in more than 20 heavily military populated areas, officials encourage you to donate your blood there because, if the blood centers don't have the blood on hand, they must fill their needs by purchasing blood from the civilian community.

For the center closest to you, go to http://www.tricare.osd.mil/asbpo/donor_info/donor_centers.htm

Since there are only a certain number of blood donor centers, it's obvious that not all members of the military retiree community will be able to get to one. In that case, it's still important to donate and most large cities have a community blood center.

To borrow an ASBP motto: American pride flows through us all. Donate blood.



AFTERBURNER

NEWS FOR USAF RETIRED PERSONNEL

The *Afterburner* is authorized by Air Force Instruction 36-3106. It is published in January, May and September by the Retiree Services Branch. Distribution: individuals entitled to Air Force retired pay; unremarried surviving spouses of retirees (automatically if they are receiving an annuity under Survivor Benefit Plan and/or the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan, or the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan); unremarried nonannuitant surviving spouses of deceased Air Force members who were entitled to receive retired pay, may receive the *Afterburner* by requesting it from the address below. The *Afterburner* is not sent to former spouses nor to retirees of other services. Additional copies are not available. The *Afterburner* address:

HQ AFPC/DPPTR
550 C Street W Ste 11
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4713

E-mail address is [Billy.Turner@randolph.af.mil](mailto:Bill.Turner@randolph.af.mil), and the phone number is (210) 565-2126. The *Afterburner* is available on the Internet at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/>. Retirees may write to the Co-chairmen of the Air Force Retiree Council by using the office symbol, HQ AFPC/CCU, at the address above. To change your address to receive the *Afterburner* and other official correspondence, see the procedures elsewhere in this issue.

Finance officials emphasize myPay electronic pay services

As more members of the military retiree community, including both retirees and annuitants, become more computer oriented, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials are increasing emphasis on its “myPay” system.

myPay is DFAS’ way of allowing customers to manage their pay account information easier and more surely than ever before. A secure web site and a PIN number make myPay secure, and the system has been designed to be customer friendly.

Officials point out that retired members and SBP annuitants will find:

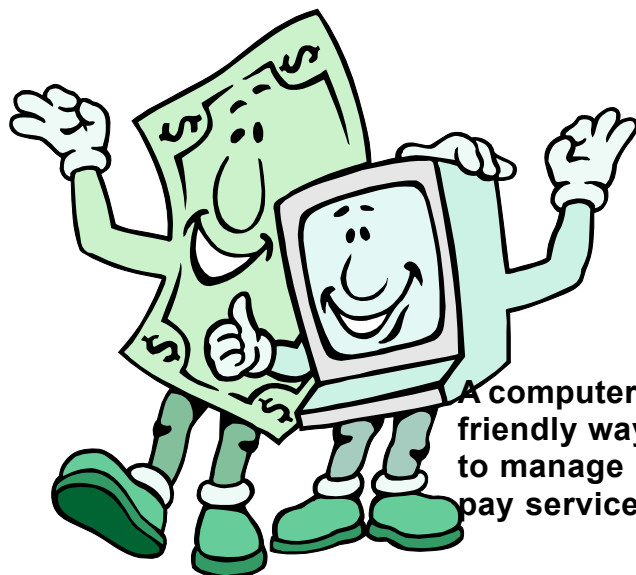
- * myPay is available via the Internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- * myPay delivers the Retiree Account Statement (RAS) or Annuitant Account Statement before print mail;
- * Changes made on myPay are effective the current pay period;
- * With myPay, you have the confidence of knowing your pay information is accurate because you’re in charge.

Access to myPay is available at <https://myPay.dfas.mil>

Features of myPay for both retirees and annuitants:

- * View and print the Retiree or Annuitant Account Statement;
- * View and print tax statements;
- * Update bank account and electronic fund transfer information;
- * Edit personal address information.

In addition, retirees can change both federal and state tax withholdings while annuitants can change federal



A computer-friendly way to manage pay services

withholdings, and retirees can manage financial allotments and U.S. Savings Bonds.

To use myPay, retirees and annuitants must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). DFAS customers without a PIN may obtain one by accessing myPay and clicking on “New Pin” or by calling 1-877-363-3677 and following the prompts.

A new random temporary PIN for your account will be mailed to your address of record. You should allow 10 business days for delivery.

State Department maintains certain overseas reports

Need a copy of a report showing a birth, marriage or death?

Usually, it’s a simple matter of writing or visiting the county court house. But what if the event took place in a foreign country as is the case among many members of the military community?

Not quite so simple, but not impossible and the U.S. Department of State is the place to go. Unfortunately, not all of those concerned are aware of the procedures.

Individuals with computers and internet access have it easier. It’s just a matter of going to <http://www.travel.state.gov> and then under Services, click on Certificates of Birth, Death and Marriage. That takes the searcher to a page titled “Birth, Death and Marriage Records” and the clickable “Apply for a copy of a report issued by an American embassy or consulate showing that a U.S. citizen was born, married or died while abroad.”

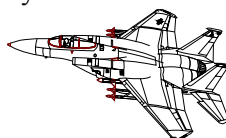
Through the magic of the Internet, that takes you to “Consular Reports of Birth, Death, and Marriage on File with

the Department of State.” There you will find the address of where to write, the cost and additional information including a form that can be downloaded for completion.

So that’s the easy way. Those who don’t feel comfortable with surfing the web can write to:

U.S. Department of State
 Passport Services
 Vital Records Section
 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 510
 Washington, DC 20524

That’s also going to be a more time consuming process since it may be necessary to go back and forth determining the needed documents. To speed things along, you may wish to call a clerk first at (202) 955-0307.



Directives allow “agent” to shop for commissary patrons

Although it's not a new policy, recent activities have brought to the forefront the issue of having someone shop for eligible commissary patrons. And it doesn't just apply to children with parent deployed, but to other authorized patrons who may have difficulty shopping on their own.

Thanks to not-widely known commissary directives, children can continue to enter the confines of any commissary as long as they are accompanied by an adult.

The military does not require children less than 10 years old to have an identification card and an approved agent may accompany those separated from parents and act on their behalf.

“This is not a new policy. It's one that has been on the books for years,” said Robert Vitikacs, the Defense Commissary Agency's (DeCA) executive director for operations and product support.

Known as the agent privilege, it's for any authorized commissary shopper who needs assistance shopping or who cannot shop on his or her own behalf because of disability, illness or infirmity. That privilege also extends to grandparents, guardians or caregivers of children of service members who may not be available due to deployment or remote assignment.

“DeCA does not grant this privilege,” said Vitikacs. “Agent privilege is authorized by the installation commander who controls who enters the installation.”

The agent does not have to be an authorized commissary shopper. The military member may request an agent pass

for approval to allow the individual who is the primary caregiver for the children of deployed parents to enter the installation.



Non-military primary caregivers should contact the identification card section on the installation to determine what legal documents, i.e., power of attorney, may also be needed to establish proof of caregiver status. At the same time, the individual can also ask what documents are required to enter the installation.

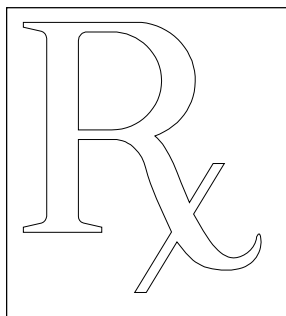
Upon verification of caregiver status, the individual receives written authorization from the commander's representative designating him/her as an “agent” to accompany the children. Usually, the letter is for a 12-month

period, but it can be extended in cases of continued hardship.

“We want to provide a touch of home for children whose parents are deployed and often, family finances are stretched to the limit. Whether they're buying for a toddler or a teen, we can help the agents get the best value for their money by saving them 30 percent or more on their groceries and personal care items. It's just one less worry deployed parents will have,” Vitikacs added.

“I also urge authorized shoppers who are elderly or disabled, and unfamiliar with the ‘agent’ privilege, to contact the identification card section on the installation to determine what proof is needed to have an agent shop in the commissary on their behalf,” Vitikacs concluded.

TRICARE states new prescription drug mail policy for overseas



Military retirees living overseas, who are eligible to receive mail through the Military Postal Service, can now receive prescription drug shipments larger than 16 ounces.

Contracted suppliers for the Tri-Care Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) program can mail a 90-day supply of prescription drugs, due to the exception to policy that would

otherwise limit the weight of the packages.

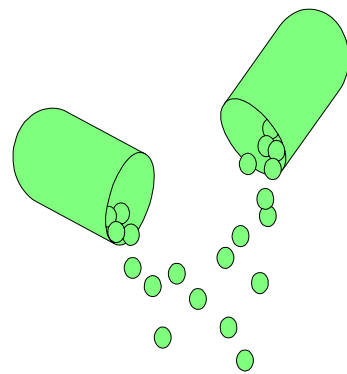
This Military Postal System exception to policy, which

was implemented May 21, is limited to prescription medication shipments, and no other suppliers or programs are authorized under this policy.

Currently, Express-Scripts, Inc., is the only authorized TMOP contracted supplier. That company is under a five-year contract to the Department of Defense as the sole supplier for prescription drugs under that program.

Previously, such shipments had to be in multiple packages each weighing less than 16 ounces.

For additional information on the TMOP program, go to <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/tmop.cfm>.



NPRC initiates online records request procedures

The National Personnel Records Center is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, which can be downloaded from the online web site.

The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating their mailroom processing time. Also, because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized.

Veterans and next of kin may access this appli-

cation at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>. Please note there is no requirement to type "www" in front of the web address.

Individuals without computer access and without access to the Standard Form 180 may continue to request copies of records such as copies of the DD Form 214, record of active duty service, by writing to the National Personnel Records Center. Make sure to include rank, branch of service, Social Security number, previous service number and, extremely important, sign the request.

The address is:

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

combat related special compensation

(Continued from page 1)

are approved will begin receiving payments about 60 days after approval. Depending on the number of applications, approval could take months, officials said.

Colonel Van Buren encourages those who think they are eligible to pay particular attention to the supporting documents. He indicated that his staff has received a number of applications with no, or very little, documentation, and that is slowing the process. "We need VA or medical documentation showing the origin of the injury. VA service connection is not enough," he said. "We must see documentation clearly establishing the cause of the diagnosis."

While it had been a slow process up until the **Afterburner** press time, Colonel Van Buren, looking on the positive, said that additional manpower is coming on board and his goal is to process between 800 and 1,000 cases a month starting Oct. 1.

The colonel noted that the Office of the Secretary of Defense is looking at adding members' unemployability and special monthly compensation into CRSC payments. However, OSD had

not provided the guidance to the military services at press time. Those cases will be worked hard once expanded criteria is issued, he emphasized. At last account, his staff has 200 approved CRSC cases being held awaiting guidance.

Information and the application are available online at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/crsc/> and military personnel flights may have the application forms. Once completed, applicants should send the form and any supporting documentation to:

United States Air Force, Disability Division (CRSC), 550 C Street West Suite 6, Randolph AFB TX 78150-4708.

Appropriate supporting documentation includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- * Department of Defense Form 214, Certificate of Release from Active Duty.

- * Air Force Form 356, Findings and Recommended Disposition of USAF Physical Evaluation Board.

- * Retirement orders.

- * Purple Heart citation and orders.

- * Any documentation indicating combat-related findings.

- * Assignment or temporary duty orders.

- * Appropriate medical records to support claim.

- * Any VA disability rating decisions made within the last year.

Those who have already applied should check the appropriate supporting documentation listed above. If a certain document hasn't been previously forwarded, send it along with your name and SSN so the document can be added to the file.

Air Force retired members applying for the compensation should send the forms registered mail, return receipt requested. This provides proof the application has been received and eliminates the need for a phone call, which only delays processing. Do not send any original documents; a copy is all that is needed.

More information is available by calling the Air Force Contact Center toll free at (866) 229-7074, commercial (210) 565-5000 or DSN 665-5000.

Next BRAC round will reflect changing times

There were 97 major base closures and 55 major realignments during previous base realignment and closure actions in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995, according to DoD documents.

Besides cutting redundant infrastructure, those BRACs resulted in a net savings of \$16 billion through fiscal 2001, according to DoD figures, and annually recurring savings of \$6 billion beyond then.

However, almost a decade has passed since the last BRAC was conducted, Raymond DuBois, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, noted during a July 10 Pentagon interview. Congress authorized DoD to execute a new BRAC round in 2005.

Much has changed since 1995, DuBois emphasized, pointing to today's war against global terrorism.

"A great deal has changed in the last 10 years that ought to lead any thinking person to the conclusion that ... (another BRAC) is a good thing to do," he said.

The next BRAC will affect stateside and U.S. territory bases. DoD, he added, is also looking at its global military force structure to see if it meets today's national security needs. Lessons learned from 9-11 and the ensuing war on terrorism, DuBois noted, suggest that adjustments should also be conducted with forces stationed overseas.

And besides trimming excess real estate that's costly to maintain, he explained, another BRAC would assist DoD to become more "joint."

"We ought to look at how all four Services can utilize a reconfigured footprint to better support the warfighting plans of the combatant commanders," DuBois said.

Although not addressed in the 2005 BRAC, it's well known, DuBois pointed out, that "there are (overseas)

places where we have a concentration of troops basically as a legacy from the Cold War — as a legacy of the post-World War II situation between the Warsaw Pact and NATO."

The Cold War "has gone away," he asserted. Consequently, he pointed out, there is no longer a need for having 70,000 U.S. troops based in Germany. In fact, DuBois noted that U.S. combatant commanders are slated to meet soon to study today's worldwide basing and warfighting needs.

The 2005 BRAC, DuBois noted, will reconfigure stateside military infrastructure to meet the realities of the 21st century. Some installations, he explained, will gain assets while others will be closed.

"The secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs (of Staff) and the combatant commanders have learned that our force structure is not necessarily positioned in the right place," DuBois pointed out, to carry out U.S. military deployment and warfighting plans in the most efficient way.

Another potential result derived from another round of base realignments and closures, DuBois noted, is fewer duty station moves: Remaining military installations would be in advantageous locations related to their military missions.

If service members move less from station to station during their careers, then "I think that has a positive impact on quality of life," DuBois said.

Basically, the war against global terrorism has caused DoD to rethink "what opportunities should we have for basing, for deployment, for supply lines - globally," DuBois concluded.

TRICARE awards dual eligible claims contract

The TRICARE Dual-Eligible Fiscal Intermediary Contract has been awarded to Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS) Insurance Corporation of Madison, Wis.

The contract is for claims processing, customer service and administrative services for individuals who are eligible for both TRICARE and Medicare. Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said the contract covers a five-year period and is valued at approximately \$487 million.

It will replace the current practice of the managed care support contractors providing these services. Claims processing, customer service and administrative services under this contract will begin on April 1, 2004.

"The DoD is committed to providing the best health care

possible for our beneficiaries," said Winkenwerder. From lessons we have learned during previous contracts, we chose to simplify contract administration, increase accountability and improve customer service by centering

these responsibilities in one contract. We are confident this will enhance the services we provide to beneficiaries while ensuring fiscal responsibility."

TDEFIC will affect the approximately 1.7 million beneficiaries who are eligible for both TRICARE and Medicare. Beneficiaries should not be affected by this change unless they need to submit a paper claim. When services begin for the contract, WPS will notify beneficiaries of the change in mailing address for paper claims submission.



Wilford Hall plays major role in national cancer study

Wilford Hall Medical Center researchers were involved in the recent study on the drug finasteride's ability to prevent prostate cancer.

Wilford Hall was the largest study site, providing roughly 10 percent of the participant population, for the seven-year, nationwide study named the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial, officials here said.

The trial, published in the July 17 edition of "The New England Journal of Medicine," found a 25 percent reduction in prostate cancer occurrences for healthy males taking finasteride. Although the findings are far short of being a cure-all answer, physicians laud the trial's discovery, according to officials.

"There are very few cancers that are potentially preventable by taking a medication," said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Duane Cespedes, urology chairman and Wilford Hall's principal investigator for the trial. "For an important cancer like prostate cancer, where 230,000 men a year are afflicted and 30,000 die, to have a pill that can reduce it by 25 percent is a major breakthrough. This is a great start."

Of the study's 18,882 men age 55 or older, 1,444 came from Wilford Hall. Half of them were given finasteride daily for seven years, while the other half took a placebo.

While finasteride reduced prostate cancer cases by 25 percent, some experts have publicly questioned if the side effects are worth the potential benefits.

As with most medications, there are tradeoffs involved, said Cespedes. Sexual side effects were slightly more prevalent in finasteride users than placebo participants, but

urination problems associated with an enlarged prostate actually improved. All patients are in an age group susceptible to developing these problems, which may explain why the side effects occurred in the first place, he said.

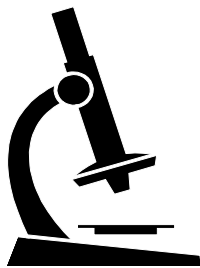
A more important concern is that while the drug appears to reduce cancer cases, the trial showed a slight increase in "aggressive" tumors. Whether they are truly more aggressive is unclear as some cancers look more aggressive under a microscope, but actually act like "normal" prostate cancer, Cespedes said.

Finasteride's "hormone effect" may be the reason for a tumor's aggressive appearance, but at this point, no one will know until more studies are completed, he said.

Preventing prostate cancer, the second deadliest cancer among men, may become the next application for finasteride, a drug normally prescribed for enlarged prostates and, in smaller doses, for treating baldness, according to officials.

The best candidates for the drug are those in groups with higher rates of prostate cancer: black men and men with a family history of prostate cancer. Officials encourage middle-aged men to talk with their primary care physicians or urologists to determine whether finasteride is appropriate.

With the closing of the study, many of the subjects are volunteering for a new trial called SELECT, according to officials. This is a 12-year international study that will examine using selenium and vitamin E to prevent prostate cancer.



TRICARE toll free numbers

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (excluding federal holidays). Calls are answered in English only.

Senior Pharmacy Program, 1-877-DoD-MEDS, (1.877.363.6337)

TRICARE For Life, 1-888-DoD-LIFE, (1.888.363.5433)

TRICARE Online, 1.866-DoD-EWEB, (1.866.363.3932)

HIPAA, 1-888-DoD-HIPA, (1.888.363.4472)

TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan - Deltal Dental 1.888.838.8737

TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy - Express Scripts 1.866.363.8667

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting Systems (DEERS) 1.800.538.9552

Regional toll free numbers — The following numbers are operational 24 hours.

Northeast (1) 1.888.999.5195

Mid-Atlantic (2) 1.800.931.9501

Southeast (3) 1.800.444.5445

Gulfsouth (4) 1.800.444.5445

Heartland (5) 1.800.941.4501

Southwest (6) 1.800.406.2832

Central (7/8) 1.888.874.9378

Southern California (9) 1.800.242.6788

Golden Gate (10) 1.800.242.6788

Northwest (11) 1.800.404.2042

Alaska (11) 1.800.242.6788

TRICARE Pacific

Hawaii

1.800.242.6788

WESTPAC

1.888.777.8343

Latin America & Canada 1.888.777.8343

Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands 1.888.777.8343

Europe 1.888.777.8343

New Shades of Green at Disney World reopening date set

The refurbished Armed Forces Recreation Center Shades of Green on Walt Disney World Resort won't open till March 1, 2004, instead of the originally planned Dec. 15, 2003, date.

Unexpected construction delays caused officials to move the date back 76 days, according to Peter F. Isaacs, chief operating officer at the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center. The Army serves as the executive agent, operating AFRCs for DoD.

"When we were on schedule, we began accepting guest reservations in December of last year," said Isaacs. "We sincerely regret the inconvenience this causes our customers and want to give them as much advance notice as possible. We are in the process of notifying those who have reservations and offering them other options."

Shades of Green General Manager Jim McCrindle personally signed more than 2,200 letters to guests already booked at Shades of Green, informing them of the delay. "We're genuinely sorry for the delay, but it was unavoidable," he said.

Guests who already hold reservations are offered three options:

Keep the same vacation dates for 2004 at the same room rates guaranteed in 2003.

Keep their vacation dates for 2003 at a comparable



Disney Resort at the same room rates plus the applicable state tax of 11 percent.

Cancel the existing reservation and receive a full refund.

The renovation and expansion project that began in April 2002 was driven by high demand that kept the original 288 rooms at or near 100 percent occupancy. The hotel is financially self-sufficient, and no taxpayer dollars are used in the operations or for the new construction. When it reopens, there will be 586 new or renovated rooms, 500 new covered parking spaces and 7,500 square feet for special events.

The current room rates of \$66 for E-1 through E-5 will only go up \$4 to \$70. Other rates are computed on a sliding scale based on rank.

The Armed Forces Recreation Center is open to DoD ID-card holders in all branches of military service: active duty and Reserve components, DoD civilians, both military and civilian DoD retirees, and their families.

"The information about our new opening date and reservations is on our web site," said McCrindle, adding, "The best way to make a reservation is to use the Web site as the phones tend to be overloaded."

For more information, access www.shadesofgreen.org or call toll free 1-888-593-2242.

AF clubs launch membership drive; to award travel-related prizes

"Travel the World on Us" is the offer being made by the Air Force Services Agency in an effort to boost the membership of Air Force clubs.

During a drive running from Aug. 18 through Oct. 31, about 140 people will win travel-related prizes valued from \$500 to \$5,000 just for becoming club members. The drive is open to all eligible nonmembers including active duty, Reserve, civilians and retirees.

"The wonderful thing about this year's drive is that people can go from Broadway to Fiji; it's up to them," said Frank Black, Air Force clubs division chief. "We like it when we can offer people the right to choose."

This year's winners are allowed to choose their own destinations, according to Black.

"If you win the \$5,000 prize, you could fly to Paris, take a cruise, rent a car, then use the balance to go see a sporting event," he said.

All prizes are redeemed through local Information, Tickets and Travel offices.

"We know our travel agents will do everything they can to make sure winners have a smooth transition when redeeming their prizes," said Denise Lanier, the Air Force ITT chief.

Winners on bases without ITT facilities will be able to



contact the Air Force Services Agency central ticket office to redeem their prizes, she said.

Current club members are also eligible for a set of prizes and are automatically entered to win, officials said. "We want our loyal members, who are the backbone of clubs, to know that we appreciate them as well," said Fred Fried, Air Force clubs operations branch chief.

Besides meals and entertainment, other member benefits include special discounts on food, entertainment, special functions, chances to win trips to the Super Bowl, Pro Bowl and a regular season NFL game.

For a membership application or more information, visit a local club.

DoD forming plan to consolidate exchange systems

DoD is working on a plan to consolidate the service exchanges under one roof, said Charles Abell, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Congress must approve any move to merge the Army and Air Forces Exchange Service, the Navy Exchange and the Marine Corps Exchange. Provided the legislators give the go-ahead, Abell said it will still be "some years" down the road before the move occurs.

One aspect officials hope will improve under the consolidation is the dividend the exchanges return to the services' morale welfare and recreation funds.

According to the AAFES Web site information, for example, MWR-type programs received \$243.9 million in fiscal 2001, which was distributed as follows: Army, \$145.4 million; Air Force, \$86.4 million; Marine Corps, \$10.2 million; and Navy, \$1.7 million. That per capita dividend translated into \$277.94 for every soldier and airman.

"(The dividend) has gone down over the last four or five years," Abell said. "We've got to do something to arrest that. This is a way to save costs and thus improve our dividend."

Abell said a consolidation will "be transparent" to exchange workers and shoppers. "Marines are still going to go to a Marine Exchange, sailors are still going to go in to a Navy Exchange, ... and airmen go into a BX and sol-

diers go into a PX," he said.

He said shoppers should see improved service, availability, variety and the ultimate result of better dividends.

Consolidating the infrastructure above store level means the system could cut down on duplication. "I don't need three people doing the same thing — there will be economies of scale there," he said. "We don't need three trucks driving up and down (Interstate) 95 — one for the Marine Exchange, one from the Army-Air Force Exchange, one from the Navy Exchange — ... going past each others' bases."

Another savings could come from a consolidated information technology system and fewer accountants, controllers and chief executive officers.

Store employees do not have to worry about their jobs. "If it takes a certain number of people to run the exchange at one base, it's probably going to take the same number of people to run that exchange after ... consolidation," he said. "If you work at the exchange, if you shop at the exchange, you should not see any difference."

Abell said there is no target figure for savings. "It's not about saving money," he said. "It's about improving the dividend to the MWR accounts to all the services. There's not much appropriated dollars at play here at all."

Blood Donor Center Locations

(See related information on page 2)

There are more than 20 ASBP blood donor centers (BDCs) in the United States and around the world. While it is not possible to have a center at every installation, BDCs have been located in areas where there is a high concentration of military personnel. Donors from all Services, government employees, retirees, and military family members are welcome at any BDC.

Following is a list of the blood donor centers by state and country along with the main commercial number and DSN number for the blood center.

Alaska -- Elmendorf Air Force Base: (907) 580-6520, DSN: (317) 580-6520.

California -- San Diego Naval Medical Center: (619) 532-6653, DSN: 522-6653; Travis Air Force Base: (707) 423-5342, DSN: 799-5342.

District of Columbia (Washington, DC) -- Walter Reed Army Medical Center: (202) 782-4156/3372, DSN: 662-4156/3372.

Georgia -- Fort Gordon: (706) 787-3234, DSN: 773-3234.

Hawaii -- Tripler Army Medical Center: (808) 433-6148, DSN: 433-6148.

Illinois -- Naval Hospital Great Lakes: (847) 688-2068, DSN: 792-2068; Scott Air Force Base: (618) 229-8869, DSN: 576-8869.

Kentucky -- Fort Knox: (502) 624-8642, DSN: 464-8642.

Maryland -- National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda: (301) 295-2109, DSN: 295-2109.

Mississippi -- Keesler Air Force Base: (228) 377-9324, DSN: 597-9324.

North Carolina -- Camp Lejeune: (910) 450-4606; Fort Bragg: (910) 396-9925, DSN: 239-9925.

Ohio -- Wright-Patterson Air Force Base: (937) 257-0580, DSN: 787-0580.

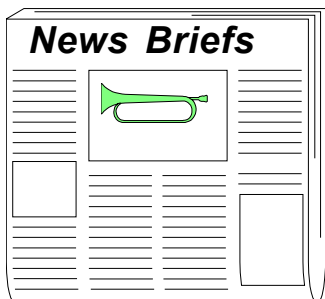
South Carolina -- Fort Jackson: (803) 751-2395, DSN: 734-2395.

Texas -- Fort Bliss: (915) 569-1504, DSN: 979-1504; Fort Hood: (254) 287-5938, DSN: 737-5938; Fort Sam Houston: (210) 295-4655, DSN: 421-4655; Lackland Air Force Base: (210) 292-8116, DSN: 554-8116.

Virginia -- Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth: (757) 953-1686, DSN: 377-1686.

Washington -- Fort Lewis: (253) 968-1903; DSN: 782-1903.

Non-United States Locations -- RAF Lakenheath, England: 011-4416-3852-8441, DSN: (314) 226-8441; Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany: 022-49-6371-86-7107, DSN: (314) 486-7107; Okinawa, Japan U.S. Naval Hospital: 011-81-611-743-7737, DSN: (314) 643-7737.



Government grave marker requests made easier

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has revised its application form to make requesting a VA grave marker easier. The new

form, Application For Standard Government Headstone or Marker (VA Form 40-1330), includes updated information about changes that expand eligibility for a government marker.

For deaths on or after September 11, 2001, Public Laws 107-103 and 107-330 made government markers available for use on veterans' graves that were already marked with privately furnished headstones or markers. Previous law prevented VA from furnishing markers when a grave was already marked.

The laws require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report to Congress by Feb. 1, 2006, on the effectiveness of this benefit and to recommend whether it should continue. One of the changes made to the application form will allow VA to report on this new benefit by tracking its use.

In January 2002, VA introduced a toll-free fax service for submitting applications. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as an alternative to regular mail. Instructions, as well as the fax number, 1-800-455-7143, are on the VA website at www.cem.va.gov. The application form on the website can be filled in and printed for submitting by mail or fax. Questions about a headstone or marker application can be directed to VA's Memorial Programs Service applicant assistance unit at 1-800-697-6947.

Funeral homes and veterans service officers are finding they can reduce the time to process a request by up to seven days and avoid postage costs. VA handles more than 1,000 requests daily for veterans' markers.

Cold War certificates still available

Service members, veterans and federal employees who served between Sept. 2, 1945 and Dec. 26, 1991 are still eligible for a Cold War Recognition Certificate, said officials of the U.S. Army Personnel Command.

In fiscal year 1998, the Secretary of Defense approved awarding the certificate to personnel who served during the Cold War. Thus far, about one million people have responded out of the 22 million entitled to receive the certificate, officials said.

An application for the Cold War Recognition Certificate can be found on the Internet at <https://coldwar.army.mil>. The web site informs applicants about the correct proce-

dures and the required documentation to receive the certificate. It also reminds them that the minimum turn around time is six months.

Applications will only be accepted by fax or mail, officials said.

More information on the certificate can be found on PERSCOM's Cold War web site or by calling customer service at (703) 325-5864.

Scams target military families, e-mail users

The Internal Revenue Service continues to see isolated instances of new tax scams.

Officials warn consumers to beware of any variation of a scenario in which a telephone caller posing as an IRS employee tells a family member he is entitled to a \$4,000 refund because his relative is in the armed forces and then requests a credit card number to cover a \$42 fee for postage.

The scammer provides an actual IRS toll-free number as the call-back number to make the call seem legitimate. However, the scammer then charges unauthorized purchases with the victim's card.

In another scheme, victims receive an e-mail that appears to be from the IRS. The e-mail contains links to a non-IRS Internet Web page that asks for personal and financial information. Such information could be used to steal the respondent's identity and get access to sensitive financial data or accounts.

The IRS does not request sensitive personal or financial data by e-mail.

People who believe they are victims of one of these scams can contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration by calling the toll-free fraud referral hotline at (800) 366-4484, faxing a complaint to (202) 927-7018 or writing to the TIGTA Hotline, P.O. Box 589, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044-0589. TIGTA's Web site is located at www.ustreas.gov/tigta.

Commissaries change coupon rules

Commissaries have started enforcing new policy revisions that limit coupon use to only one per item unless otherwise specified on a coupon.

"We still gladly welcome the use of coupons. We're only limiting the number of coupons a customer can use per item to what is specifically stated on the coupons. If the coupons state more than one per item can be used, then we'll accept them. If it doesn't, then we'll accept only one per item," said Bob Vitikacs, the Defense Commissary Agency's executive director for operations and product support.

The revised DeCA policy more accurately reflects manufacturers' intent for coupon use, which has always been one coupon per item unless otherwise stated. DeCA policy had allowed commissaries to accept multiple coupons unless specifically stated as only one per coupon.

Do Not Call Registry does booming business

Consumers had added 30 million telephone numbers to the National Do Not Call Registry as of Aug. 18.

Officials said 24 million telephone numbers had been registered via the Internet with the remaining 6 million registered via the toll-free telephone number established by the Federal Trade Commission. Others who wish to get on the list or who just need more information should go to www.ftc.gov/donotcall. People without computer access may register by calling 1-888-382-1222; for TTY, call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the phone number you wish to register.

The registry affords people the opportunity to limit the telemarketing calls they receive. It will be enforced starting Oct. 1, 2003 and most telemarketers will be required to remove the numbers on the registry from their call lists.

The National Do Not Call Registry is managed by the FTC and will be enforced by that agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and state law enforcement officials.

Individuals registering by Aug. 31 will start receiving fewer calls by Oct. 1, 2003. Those registering after Sept. 1 should note that telemarketers covered by the National Do Not Call Registry will have up to three months from the date you register to stop calling you.

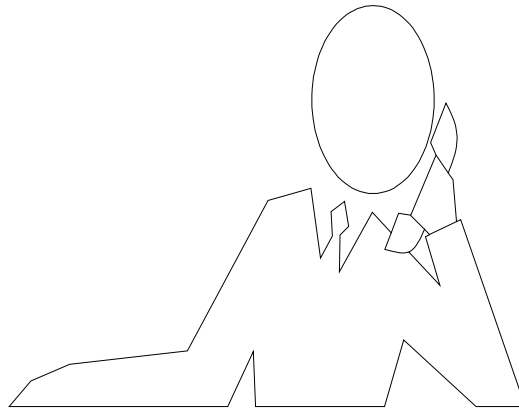
Possible no-call scam

If there is a way to make a few dollars with little or no work, somebody is going to find it.

Within days after the Federal Trade Commission announced the National Do Not Call Registry, it was necessary for that agency to alert folks about people trying to take advantage of them.

The FTC advises everyone that web sites or phone solicitations that claim they can or will register a consumer's name or phone number on the national list — especially those that charge a fee — are a scam.

The National Do Not Call Registry is a free service of the federal government and you must do it yourself.



Most of the 27 states that currently have active do not call lists will transfer numbers from their lists to the national registry, but a few will not. That information is shown on the previously mentioned web site. Individuals residing in a state transferring its do not call list to the national registry need not re-register, but others do.

You can register cell phones and phones in your personal residence but you can't register for family and friends, according to FTC officials. By e-mail, you may register up to three telephone numbers at one time. To register more phones, you must go through the registration process more than once.

Business phones are not covered by the National Do Not Call Registry. Also, political solicitations are not covered. Telemarketers calling to solicit charitable contributions are not covered by

the registry, but if you make a request to a specific organization that they not call you, they are required to honor your request.

If the call is really for the sole purpose of conducting a survey, it is not covered. Only telemarketing calls are covered — that is, calls that solicit sales of goods or services. Callers purporting to take a survey, but also offering to sell goods or services, must comply with the National Do Not Call Registry.

Long-term care enrollment continues

Initial enrollment for long-term care insurance has ended, but eligible individuals can still apply, according to Air Force Personnel Center officials at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Those eligible include military retirees and qualified family members, Air Force active-duty, selected Reserve, appropriated-fund civilian employees.

The insurance does not have an annual open season like many other health-care programs, officials said. The initial open enrollment season was held during 2002 to introduce the program, and officials have not decided when

there will be another open season.

The federal program was authorized by Congress in September 2000 to help federal employees, including military, defray the rising costs of long-term care. This can include home care, nursing home care or assisted-living facilities for people no longer able to perform normal daily activities because of chronic mental or physical conditions, officials said.

More information on the insurance program and how to enroll is available online at www.ltcfeds.com — or by calling (800) 582-3337 or TDD (800) 843-3557. Offices are open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

Air Force Assistance Fund donations up \$800,000

Airmen are giving more than \$5.9 million to this year's Air Force Assistance Fund campaign — \$800,000 more than last year.

The fund raises money for four Air

Force-related charities that benefit active-duty, Reserve, Guard and retired Air Force people, as well as surviving spouses and families.

This year's donations exceeded the

\$4.8 million goal by 22 percent, said John Lowrance, the fund coordinator.

About 70 percent of donations are designated for the Air Force Aid Society, the largest of the four charities.

"Since September 11, 2001, requests for (Air Force Aid Society) assistance increased 13 percent," said retired Lt. Gen. Mike McGinty, Air Force Aid Society's chief executive officer. "In 2002, we helped 34,000 people with \$24.1 million of assistance — that's a lot of help."

This was the campaign's 30th year.

How to change your correspondence address

The **Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel**, is mailed to Air Force retirees and Survivor Benefit Plan annuitants using correspondence addresses supplied by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL).

Addresses of non annuitant surviving spouses of Air Force retirees are maintained in a separate data base explained below.

It's important to send the change of

address to the correct location to ensure the change is made in a timely manner. Please note that the London, KY address below is a contractor that films the written request as a computer image and transmits it to DFAS.

SBP/RSFPP annuitants –

Those surviving spouses who are in receipt of or entitled to a Survivor Benefit Plan/Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan annuity (this includes surviving spouses of retirees who were enrolled in SBP/RSFPP but who are receiving DIC in lieu of the SBP/RSFPP, must send a change of address to:

DFAS

U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London, KY 40742-7131
Phone: 1(800)321-1080 or
FAX: 1(800)982-8459

If mailing or FAXing, include your Social Security number and that of the sponsor and sign your request.

Retirees – Those members in receipt of or entitled to retired pay, including retirees whose pay (part or all), comes from the VA or from Civil Service because of combined federal service), should send their change of address to:

DFAS
U. S. Military Retirement Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130
Phone: 1 (800)321-1080 or
FAX: 1(800)469-6559

Include your Social Security number and sign your request when mailing or FAXing.

Non-SBP/RSFPP annuitants

— Surviving spouses of retirees who were not enrolled in either the Survivor Benefit Plan/Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (but who may or may not be receiving a DIC pension from the VA), and who are currently receiving the **Afterburner** in their own name, should mail the new address and include the sponsor's retired grade and SSN to:

HQ AFPC/DPPTR
550 C Street West Ste 11
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4713

Surviving spouses in this category but who are not receiving the **Afterburner** in their own name may request to be placed on the list by sending a letter of request to the same address.

DO NOT use this portion as a Change of Address form. See information in the appropriate block above for the correct change of address procedures. Anything else will only delay matters.

HQ AFPC/DPPTR
550 C STREET WEST STE 11
RANDOLPH AFB TX 78150-4713

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