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E-AFTERBURNER

Vol. 53, No. 1

AFRP 36-1

February 2010

People opting out of hard-copy

Nearly 16,000 retirees and annuitants have signed up to receive the *Afterburner* electronically and opt out of receiving hard-copy issues in the mail.

The call went out in the September 2009 *Afterburner* asking for people with computer access to please opt out of receiving a hard copy if they have ways of getting issues electronically.

"A very big thank you to everyone who responded and asked Air Force Retiree Services to remove their name from the *Afterburner* mailing list," said retired Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray, co-chair of the Air

Force Retiree Council. "The more folks we can get to opt for the *e-Afterburner* only, the more printing and mailing costs we can save."

There are more than 791,500 Air Force retirees and surviving spouses on the hard-copy mailing list. Printing and postage fees have pushed the cost above \$300,000 for just one issue.

"We understand that many of our retirees and surviving spouses do not have computer access so they rely on a printed version," said retired Lt. Gen. Steven R. Polk, co-chair of the Air Force Retiree Council, in the last *Afterburner*.

"But we need to do everything we

can to keep the costs down."

Another way people can help is if they must receive a hard copy, ensure that only one copy being delivered per household.

"Retirees or annuitants sharing a household can arrange to receive only one copy per address; better yet, everyone in a household eligible to receive the *Afterburner* can opt out if they can get their issues electronically," explained Chief Murray.

With several thousand retirees and annuitants living abroad without U.S. postal privileges, mailing them their *Afterburner* is very expensive. In September 2009, it cost 32 cents per copy for domestic mailing and 72 cents per copy for international mailing.

"Several hundred *Afterburners* that we send overseas are returned to us because of faulty addresses or the person is no longer at the address," said Pat Peek, chief of Air Force Retiree Services. "This wastes thousands of dollars.

"If our overseas audience can get their copies online, it would really help cut our postage costs," she explained.

To be removed from the hard-copy mailing list, people who are satisfied to receive the *e-Afterburner* should send their full name and retired rank, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the last four digits of their Social Security number to afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil.

New base-entry system requires retiree, family register for access

Retirees, survivors and their family members have begun registering their identification cards at Air Force installations worldwide as the service implements a new base-entry system that uses scanning devices to manage access.

The Defense Biometric Identification System, or DBIDS, is already operational at some bases overseas and in the continental United States.

Open registrations for DBIDS are under way at installations gearing up for this Air Force-wide initiative. Particular dates, times and locations vary by base so people should stay tuned to local media outlets, or contact their local Retiree Activities Office, for specific details.

Actual registration takes only a few minutes, according to Air Force Security Forces officials.

DBIDS uses an automated process to ensure only those people with authorized access are allowed to enter the installation. Other benefits include giving guards visual and audible crosschecks to verify identities of those requesting access.

Guards scanning ID cards will see a red or green display at the bottom of their scanner screens. A red display will say "stop" and indicate why

*Please see **DBIDS** on Page 3*

Complete identity means better customer service

by Tammy Cournoyer
Afterburner editor

One of the many ways to contact Air Force Retiree Services is via e-mail through what we call our “organizational inbox.” This inbox is very popular and received nearly 10,000 e-mails last year – not counting the thousands of e-mails from people wishing to opt out of receiving a hard-copy *Afterburner*.

We’re proud of our e-mail service and those numbers because it means members of our retiree family have another avenue to receive assistance. Plus, a majority of those e-mailers received a response within 24 hours – not counting weekends.

But there is something all of you should keep in mind when sending us e-mails that can help us help you much faster; especially if your name is John Smith.

When using the e-mail service, providing too much information is always better than just giving scant details, especially when it comes

to indentifying yourself. Signing an e-mail with only a first and last name doesn’t tell us who you are. (There are currently 229 retirees named “John Smith.”)



Editor's Notebook

Provide your full name including middle initial. (Only two of the retirees named “John Smith” don’t have any middle initials; however, “R” is the most popular with 25 people.)

Please give us your rank so we cannot only identify you, but address you properly with the respect and courtesy you deserve. (There is only one Airman named “John Smith” who is a retired warrant officer.)

Don’t forget to give at least the last four digits of your Social Security number so we can pinpoint who you are and quickly provide you with personalized service.

Self-help is another path to fast service. Check out the Retiree Services Web site at www.retirees.af.mil for your answers. Browse through the “Library” or scroll through “Resources” for information and points of contact for various subjects.

People who subscribe to the Air Force Retiree News Service receive articles equipped with links or phone numbers for more information. Please don’t hit “Reply” and expect us to answer your query or respond to your comment -- we’re just the messenger. Use the sources provided with the article for responses to specific questions or concerns.

If you do need to contact us via e-mail, please use afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil. (We hope you see this, John Doe – yes, there is one.)



AFTERBURNER

NEWS FOR USAF RETIRED PERSONNEL

The **Afterburner** is authorized by Air Force Instruction 36-3106. When funding permits, it is printed three times a year by Air Force Retiree Services. Distribution: Individuals entitled to Air Force retired pay; unremarried surviving spouses of retirees (automatically if they are entitled to 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:

AFPC/DPSIAR
550 C Street W Ste 8
Randolph AFB TX 78150

E-mail address is afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil and the phone number is (210) 565-2126. The **Afterburner** is available on the Internet at www.retirees.af.mil. Retirees may write to the Co-chairmen of the Air Force Retiree Council by using the office symbol, AFPC/CCU at the street address above. To change your address to receive the **Afterburner** and other official correspondence, see the procedures information in this issue.

Important numbers

Defense Finance and Accounting Service

800-321-1080

Casualty Assistance

877-353-6807

Social Security Administration

800-772-1213

Veterans Affairs

800-827-1000

**All numbers are toll free*

Joint basing is changing signs at gates, but mergers have little impact on retirees

Although the signs at some gates are changing, joint basing has had very little impact on services and support for retirees. In fact, things should only get better.

Efficiencies and effectiveness are the driving forces behind joint basing. By pulling together the best of what each service has to offer, the best practices are being gleaned to become a joint base's standard. This means the best possible service to customers.

Unlike normal Base Realignment and Closure actions, joint basing closes no installations meaning retirees living nearby will still have access to the same support they are used to receiving.

Joint basing is being done in two phases. Phase 1 bases have already stood up and are fully operational. These joint bases include: McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Myer-Henderson Hall, Andrews-Naval Air Facility Washington, Little Creek-Fort Story, and Joint Region Marianas, which includes Andersen Air Force Base).

Phase 2 bases will be transitioning people, real property and services to the joint base command over the next eight months. They should be fully operational by Oct. 1. The joint bases in Phase 2 include: Lewis-McChord, Anacostia-Bolling, Elmendorf-Richardson, Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Charleston, Langley-Eustis, and San Antonio involving Randolph, Lackland and Fort Sam Houston.

DBIDS Continued from Page 1.....

base entry is not authorized, giving up to 26 different messages. Besides showing if access is authorized or denied, the scanner allows a gate guard to see a detailed view that provides more information about the card holder. The photo of the card holder will be the image taken when the card was registered in the system.

Although the actual scanning of the cards by guards only takes a few seconds, there may be some delays at gates as everyone gets used to the process.

People should stay tuned to local information outlets for details on the registration process taking place at their nearest Air Force installation. (Robert Goetz contributed to this article.)

The Air Force is involved in 10 joint-base actions, and is actually the "lead service" for six of them. For example, in San Antonio the Air Force is responsible for all of the support associated with the combined installations -- even the Army civilian employees at Fort Sam Houston will become Air Force civilian employees.

One area that is impacting retirees is base decals for vehicles. Although a majority of Air Force bases stopped requiring and issuing decals years ago, other services still require them for access to their respective installations. Air Force retirees must comply with the entry requirements of each particular installation so they may need to get a visitor's pass if the Air Force is not the lead service at a joint base. For example, at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling where the Navy is the lead service, people must have vehicle access decals beginning Oct. 1. Drivers who frequent such installations may want to consider registering their vehicle at that installation, if they are allowed to do so.

Total Force Service Center delivers virtual connection

The Total Force Service Center delivers personnel services to regular Air Force, Air National Guard, Reserve, civilian and retiree populations through a virtual connection of the Air Force's personnel services centers.

"TFSC" is the term for the virtual connection of the Air Force Personnel Center in San Antonio and the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver. These centers provide Airmen seamless access to personnel information services and tools at any time and from any location by calling 800-525-0102.

Overseas callers can dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number from the country they are in, then (800) 525-0102. AT&T direct access numbers can be obtained from www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.

'Tricare U.' offers free benefits courses

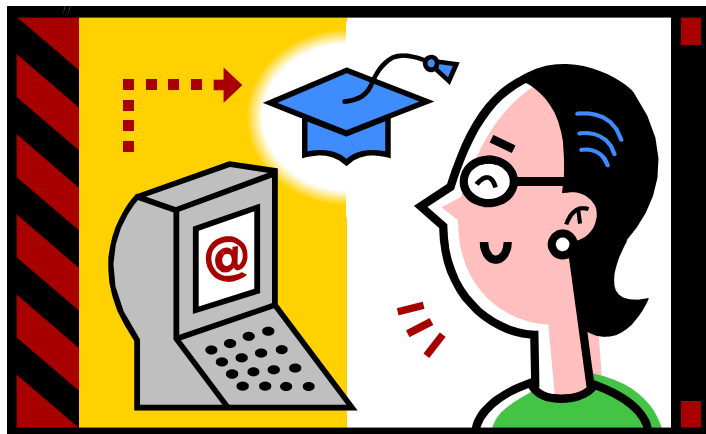
FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFRNS) – If you are new to Tricare and eager to learn about your health care benefits or an old hand who wants to know the latest changes, Tricare University is the place to go.

Tricare University offers free online courses 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year at www.tricare.mil/tricareu.

“The courses can be taken anytime, and you can learn at your own pace,” said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the Tricare Management Activity. “It’s the simplest way to learn about your Tricare benefit.”

Of the different courses online, the Tricare Public Course provides the quickest and easiest way to get a general overview and basic knowledge of Tricare programs. There is no registration for this course and it is accessible to anyone who wants to know more about Tricare.

The Tricare Fundamentals Course is much more in-depth as it is primarily designed for benefit counselors and family support staff who provide



counseling and assistance to Tricare beneficiaries. Topics covered include Tricare eligibility, Tricare programs and plans and online resources. Registration is needed to take the course and “graduates” who pass the test at the end of the course receive a certificate from Tricare.

To take one of the offered courses, go to www.tricare.mil/tricareu and click “online training” for a list of options. (Courtesy of Tricare)

RESOURCES

Air Force Aid Society

Contact the Airman and Family Readiness Flight on any Air Force base, or go to the society's Web site at www.afas.org/. Phone 800-769-8951.

Air Force Enlisted Village

The Air Force Enlisted Village was founded in 1967 to provide a safe, secure and dignified place for indigent surviving spouses of retired Air Force personnel. The village's primary goal and focus is to provide a home and financial assistance to these spouses. Phone toll free 800-258-1413. Send e-mail to afef@afenlistedfoundation.org. The Web address is www.afenlistedwidows.org.

Air Force Village Foundation

A retirement community for retired and honorably separated officers and their spouses, surviving

spouses and elderly family members. Call toll free 800-762-1122. Send e-mail to info@airforcevillages.com. The Web address is www.airforcevillages.com.

Arlington National Cemetery

For general information call 703-607-8000. Contact the Interment Services Branch at 703-607-8585 regarding funeral arrangements and eligibility requirements. Please note that the Arlington National Cemetery staff does not make pre-arrangements. Visit the Web site at www.arlingtoncemetery.org.

Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington Campus

Phone toll free 800-422-9988 or fax 202-730-3492. For general questions send an e-mail to publicaffairs@afhr.gov and specify “DC” in the subject line. Visit the Web site at www.afhr.gov.

Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport Campus

Closed because of Hurricane Katrina, the Gulfport campus was severely damaged and is currently being rebuilt. Phone 228-604-2205. For general questions, send an e-mail to publicaffairs@afhr.gov and specify “Gulfport” in the subject line. Visit the Web site at www.afhr.gov.

Armed Forces Vacation Club

The Armed Forces Vacation Club is a space-available program offering Department of Defense-affiliated people affordable condominium vacations at more than 3,500 resorts worldwide. For more information, visit www.afvclub.com/default.asp.

Delta Dental Plan for Retirees

For inquiries, call 888-838-8737 or visit www.ddpdelta.org.

DOD Lodging Reservations

Air Force, 888-235-6343 (AF-LODGE) -- after the prompt, dial first three digits of base name -- or visit <http://dodlodging.net/>; Army, 800-462-7691 (GO-ARMY-1) or visit www.armymwr.com/portal/travel/lodging/; Navy, 800-628-9466 (NAVY INN) or visit www.navy-lodge.com; Marine Corps, visit www.usmc-mccs.org/lodging/index.cfm?sid=rf

Medicare

Call 800-633-4227 or visit www.medicare.gov.

Pay Matters

Call the Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland Center toll free at 800-321-1080; fax 800-469-6559. SBP annuitants may use the same voice toll-free number, but the fax is 800-982-8459.

Social Security

Call toll free 800-772-1213 or visit the Web site at www.ssa.gov.

CSAF speaks of future: *Air Force must remain agile, ready*

by Tech. Sgt. Chyenne A. Adams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS)

-- The Air Force must remain agile and able to act in response to current affairs while being ready and able to respond to any number of potential contingencies, said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz during a recent conference on National Security, Strategy and Policy.

Flexibility, he added, is essential to the Air Force's ability to contribute to the joint team and ensure its success.

General Schwartz said national defense is a total team effort, and "joint integration and interservice cooperation toward enhanced air-land and air-sea interoperability remains a top strategic imperative."

Rapidly advancing adversary capabilities and threats that aren't confined to any single domain pose significant challenges, and only a coordinated response from all of

the military services will deliver what is required for national security, the general told the conference group.

"As we further integrate, the benefits are not limited to a single domain," he said. "Air power makes surface warfare better, and land and sea power enhance the effectiveness of air forces."

General Schwartz also explained that to ensure the continued viability of air and space operations, there needs to be options for operating from distributed bases around the globe and for delivering balanced capabilities through smaller, tailored forces.

The service's dependence on petroleum is another issue the Air Force must continue to address, General Schwartz said.

"The Air Force consumes more petroleum each year than any other agency in the U.S. government, and thus is the most susceptible to energy-price volatility and disruption of logistics lines," he said.

"Each \$10 increase in the price of a barrel of oil equates to a \$600 million increase in fuel costs to the Air Force."

Air Force engineers have made significant headway and continue to field innovative technologies to provide energy to bases, reduce the logistical footprint and research new propulsion systems for future platforms, the general said.

The general used the current example of rapid air mobility response to humanitarian operations in Haiti in his remarks.

"Yet again, in critical moments, American air power has made, and will continue to make, a significant difference," he said.

General Schwartz identified the key elements in the Air Force's path to the future.

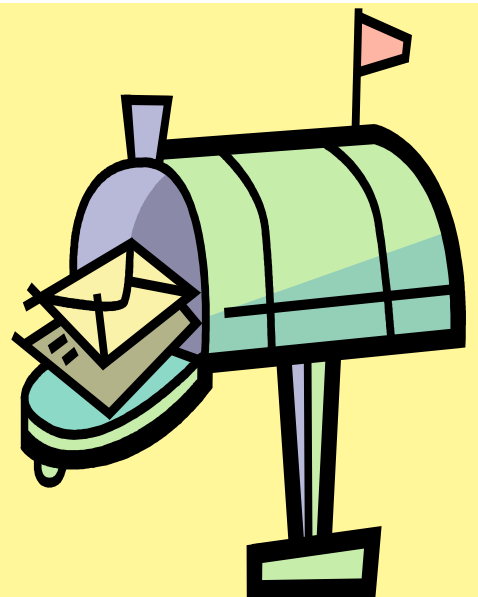
"Our Air Force has the following overriding imperatives: to increase our capabilities, decrease our vulnerabilities and enhance our integration with our joint and coalition partners," he said.

Air Force Retiree Services does not maintain mailing addresses nor can its staff access files to change someone's address. Retirees and annuitants must notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service with their changes.

When funding permits, mailing labels for the Afterburner are created using the addresses on file with DFAS.

Address changes for retirees can be made by calling DFAS at 800-321-1080, or those people with a myPay account can make the change online. Changes can be faxed to 800-469-6559, or sent via mail to DFAS, US Military Retirement Pay, PO Box 7130, London KY 40742-7130.

Annuitants can call DFAS, use myPay, fax 800-982-8459 or mail changes to DFAS, US Military Annuitant Pay, PO Box 7131, London KY 40742-7131.



Air Force Retiree Council meets in May

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- The Air Force Retiree Council is gearing up for its annual meeting at the Air Force Personnel Center here May 3 to 7.

Established in 1972, the council provides a link between the Air Force retiree community -- retirees, family members and surviving spouses worldwide -- and the Air Force chief of staff.

Today's council is comprised of two co-chairmen and 15 members representing retirees by geographical areas in the United States and overseas. There are also two members-at-large appointed by the co-chairmen for their expertise in certain areas.

Retired Lt. Gen. Steven R. Polk and retired Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray currently serve as the council's co-chairmen. They maintain contact with fellow council members and many military associations, and obtain their views on retiree matters. They also meet with retiree council co-chairmen from the other services to discuss issues that are common to all military retirees.

During this year's meeting, the council will discuss topics brought to their attention by Retiree Activities Office directors worldwide. There are 109 Retiree Activities Offices and each council member oversees the retiree activities programs within his/her respective area of responsibility.

Following this year's meeting, the co-chairmen will report the council's findings directly to the chief of staff.

Joining General Polk and Chief Murray at this year's meeting are the following retirees and their respective areas:

Col. Milton L. Felth -- Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington

Chief Master Sgt. Thomas P. Kelley -- California

Chief Master Sgt. Burton L. Clyde -- Arizona and New Mexico

Lt. Col. John S. Lannefeld -- Colorado, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming

Lt. Col. Lawrence M. Phillips -- Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Chief Master Sgt. Fred K. Dickinson -- Texas

Col. William A. Kehler -- Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma

Lt. Col. Roger S. Winburg -- Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia

Col. Thomas R. Adams -- Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee

Col. William W. Graham -- Florida, Puerto Rico and Panama

Lt. Col. Edward J. Cotter -- Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia

Chief Master Sgt. Charles E. Lucas -- Delaware, District of Columbia, and Maryland

Col. Sanford Rader -- Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont

Maj. David G. Whitford -- Pacific Region including Alaska and Hawaii

Chief Master Sgt. Michelle A. Lippert -- Atlantic Region including the Azores

The council members-at-large are retired **Cols. Jane E. Edwards and Frank G. Rohrbough**.

Retirees can write to General Polk or Chief Murray at:

HQ AFPC/CCU
550 C STREET WEST STE 8
RANDOLPH AFB TX 78150-4713

MORE RESOURCES

Tricare

The Web site is www.tricare.mil. Choose from one of three regional numbers: West, 888-874-9378; North, 877-874-2273; South, 800-444-5445; overseas, 888-777-8343. If you are a Tricare for Life member, you can call 866-773-0404.

Call the Tricare Information Center at 877-363-6337. For Tricare Retiree Delta Dental Plan inquiries, call 888-838-8737 or visit www.ddpdelta.org.

Tricare Mail-Order Pharmacy Program (Express Scripts, Inc.)

In United States, call toll free 866-363-8667; or overseas, call 866-275-4732. Visit the Web site at www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE.

VA matters

For benefit inquiries, call 800-827-1000; life insurance 800-

669-8477; status of headstones and markers, 800-697-6947; special issues such as Gulf War/radiation/Agent Orange/Project Shad call 800-749-8387; and GI Bill and education matters call 888-442-4551. Visit the Web site at www.va.gov.

Web fueling information, dialogue delivery formats; Air Force Personnel Center meeting hunger for change

by April Rowden
AFPC Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFRNS) -- Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr -- the Web is fueling society's digital hunger for real-time information and dialogue, and the Air Force Personnel Center and the Air Force Services Agency are serving up the first course.

Two Twitter accounts are currently being managed by the public affairs office here - AFCareers and USAF_Services.

Twitter is a free micro blogging site where users post messages, called tweets, in 140 characters or less, from a computer or mobile device. (To grasp how concise the text-like messages must be, the previous sentence used exactly 140 characters.)

At www.twitter.com/AFCareers, people can track the latest program implemented; look for links to civilian job announcements; keep current with Wounded Warrior Care; and see news for retirees.

On www.twitter.com/USAF_Services, cyber junkies can learn about special events; read up on the latest Year of the Air Force Family celebrations; and follow the transition of Air Force Crossroads to https://www.usafservices.com.

And most importantly, Twitterers can tweet back with their thoughts and opinions.

People have two primary avenues for viewing our Twitter feeds. They can visit each page randomly, or they can "follow" the accounts and have the most recent tweets flow directly to them when they log into their accounts.

As of Oct. 31, there were

nearly 25 million Twitter accounts registered in the United States, according to a report from Quantcast Corp. Approximately 44 percent of the users self-identified themselves as being 18-34 years old. Those 35-49 made up the second largest percentage of users at 28 percent.

Within the Air Force, a significant amount of personnel are within Twitter's primary users' age: almost 40 percent of the force is below the age of 26.

As we look into 2010, the public affairs office will begin revving up its Web presence using podcasts, Facebook and LinkedIn in a synchronized effort to keep Airmen informed of activities that impact their personal and professional lives.

When these sites go live, they will be announced via Twitter and other marketing venues.

myPay requiring new user name, password

CLEVELAND (AFRNS) -- Retirees and annuitants with myPay accounts need to establish new user names and passwords if they have not already done so using the new format.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service implemented this new access strategy in an effort to increase the security of user information.

The myPay online pay account management system allows many of the 6 million payroll customers of DFAS to access pay information and update such items as direct deposit account numbers, start or stop allotments, alter tax withholding amounts and retrieve tax forms.

In the past, myPay account

access relied on a user's Social Security number and a DFAS-provided personal identification number. Later enhancements allowed the user to change their user name, known as a login ID, from their SSN to one of their own making. While the user names were masked (actual letters, numbers and symbols were not visible on the computer screen), more sophisticated "key logging" spyware could potentially provide this information to identity thieves should a user's computer become compromised.

This was also behind an earlier security upgrade that required the use of a virtual keyboard when entering a PIN. The virtual keyboard uses mouse clicks rather than keyboard entry to enter a PIN and access a user's account.

According to myPay officials, customized login IDs and passwords will allow DFAS customers more

*Please see **myPay** on Page 10*



Air Force Retiree Activities Offices

Retiree Activities Offices are made up of volunteers from all services including surviving spouses. Their charter is to coordinate, establish and staff an office on an active-duty, Reserve or Guard base through command channels that will assist retirees with myriad actions. These actions include: serving as an information center for space-available travel, Tricare, base services, etc; offering referrals for financial assistance and pay matters; counseling

active-duty Airmen nearing retirement; and providing literature on retirement issues. Another major activity involves working with base agencies to set up Retiree Activity Day events offering flu shots by base medical personnel, briefings by different base agencies on respective services, tax preparation and advice, staff judge advocate assistance, base tours, etc.

The following is a listing of Air Force-wide established RAOs by state:

Alabama

Maxwell

Phone: (334) 953-6725,
e-mail: retiree.affairs@maxwell.af.mil

Alaska

Elmendorf

Phone: (907) 552-2337/5532

Arizona

Davis-Monthan

Phone: (520) 228-5100
e-mail: retired@dm.af.mil

Luke

Phone: (623) 856-3923
e-mail: rao@luke.af.mil

Arkansas

Little Rock

Phone: (501) 987-6095
Toll Free: (877) 815-3111
e-mail: john.heffernan@littlerock.af.mil

California

Beale

Phone: (916) 634-2157
e-mail: page_erickson2000@yahoo.com

Edwards

Phone: (661) 277-0237/4931
e-mail: 95abw.rao@edwards.af.mil

Los Angeles

Phone: (310) 653-5144
e-mail: rao@losangeles.af.mil

March

Phone: (951) 655-4077/4079
e-mail: rao@march.af.mil

McClellan

Phone: (916) 561-7507
e-mail: george.moses@va.gov

Onizuka

Phone: (650) 603-8047

Travis

Phone: (707) 424-3904
e-mail: joseph.rowan@travis.af.mil

Vandenberg

Phone: (805)-606-5474
e-mail: efgustafson@charter.net

Colorado

Buckley

Phone: (720) 847-6693/9213
e-mail: bob.vansciver@buckley.af.mil

USAF Academy

Phone: (719) 333-1055

Peterson

Phone: (719) 556-7153
e-mail: pafbrao@peterson.af.mil

Delaware

Dover

Phone: (302) 677-4612
e-mail: rao@dover.af.mil

District of Columbia

Bolling

Phone: (202) 767-5244
e-mail: rao@bolling.af.mil

Florida

Central Florida

Phone: (352) 430-1679
e-mail: centralfloridarao@thevillages.net

Eglin

Phone: (850) 882-5916
e-mail: jack.houlgate@eglin.af.mil

Homestead

Phone: (305) 224-7580/7581
e-mail: rao@homestead.af.mil

Hurlburt Field

Phone: (850) 884-5443
e-mail: rao@hurlburt.af.mil

MacDill

Phone: (813) 828-4555
e-mail: rao@macdill.af.mil

Patrick

Phone: (321) 494-5464
e-mail: rao@patrick.af.mil

Tyndall

Phone: (850) 283-2737
e-mail: rao@tyndall.af.mil

Georgia

Moody

Phone: (229) 257-3209
e-mail: rao@moody.af.mil

Robins

Phone: (478) 327-4707
e-mail: ernest.munson@robins.af.mil

Hawaii

Hickam

Phone: (808) 449-0674

Idaho

Mountain Home

Phone: (208) 828-4878
e-mail: 366rao@acc.af.mil

Illinois

Arlington Heights

Phone: (847) 506-7625
Toll Free: (800) 741-4650 Ext 7625

e-mail: oharearlingtonrao@sbcglobal.net

Rantoul

Phone: (217) 893-1723 (answering machine)
e-mail: geneandjune@aol.com

Scott

Phone: (618) 256-5092
e-mail: rao@scott.af.mil

Kansas

McConnell

Phone: (316) 759-3829
e-mail: rao.mcconnell@mcconnell.af.mil

Louisiana

Barksdale

Phone: (318) 456-5976
Toll Free: (866) 544-2412
e-mail: rao@barksdale.af.mil

Maryland

Andrews

Phone: (301) 981-2726/2180
e-mail: rao@andrews.af.mil

Massachusetts

Hanscom

Phone: (781) 377-2476
e-mail: retiree@hanscom.af.mil

Otis

Phone: (508) 968-4175
e-mail: rao@otis@gis.net

Westover

Phone: (413) 557-3918/3424
e-mail: raodir@westover.af.mil

Michigan

Oscoda

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*A very special thank
you to all the volunteers
who serve in Air Force
RAOs worldwide.*

*For more details on
individual offices, visit
www.retirees.af.mil and
click on "RAOS" in the
page's top navigation
bar.*

Compensation available for stop loss

Air Force approves 2,000 people, so far, for payment of \$500 for each month they were affected

Current and former Airmen who were involuntarily held on active duty beyond an approved separation or retirement date as a direct result of stop loss between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, may be eligible for a Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay compensation of \$500 for each month they were affected. The program was announced last summer and affected Airmen started applying for compensation Oct. 21.

The 2009 War Supplemental Appropriation Act set aside \$534.4 million for the Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay compensation authority. The Air Force used stop loss for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 and 2002, and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

The Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Authority compensates servicemembers and members of the Reserve components who served on active duty while his or her enlistment or period of obligated service

was involuntarily extended, or whose eligibility for retirement was suspended, according to William J. Carr, deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in a memorandum dated Sept. 23.

Ensuring the word is getting out is important to Air Force officials.

"The Air Force received roughly 2,700 claims since October 2009, and has approved 2,000 of those for payment. We want to ensure all potentially eligible individuals hear about the program and have an opportunity to apply," said Lt. Col. Damon Menendez, the Air Force Personnel Center Separations branch chief.

The payment is also payable to legally designated beneficiaries of deceased or incapacitated Airmen.

Eligible individuals have until Oct. 21, 2010, to file their claim. Air Force officials will evaluate all claims based upon historical records as well as all supporting documentation the applicant may submit.

To make a claim, eligible active, retired and former Airmen, or legally designated beneficiaries, may download a stop loss claim application from the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss, or call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102 for assistance. (Master Sgt. Russell P. Petcoff, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Office, contributed to this article.)

myPay

Continued from Page 7

flexibility and opportunities to increase the security of their personal information.

Login IDs, also known as user names, will require six to 129 alphanumeric characters that will be unique to one user only. Should a user attempt to create a login ID that has already been established, they will be informed to attempt another request using a different ID.

Passwords will be created by each user and must meet myPay standards:

Instructions for creating login IDs and passwords are available on the myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> to assist users. Users can also call the Customer Support Unit at 888-332-7411 or click the "Contact Us" link on the myPay home page for assistance.

Accounts with a Restricted Access PIN, which allows access to pay account information without the ability to make changes for persons authorized by the primary user, will also be prompted to establish a limited access ID and password using the same requirements. (Courtesy of DFAS)

SSAN removal from identity cards on hold

Phase Two of the process to remove printed Social Security numbers from retiree identification cards set to begin early this year has been delayed until further notice.

When a new plan is made available to the Services, information will be advertised through Air Force retiree news outlets and other public affairs media.

There are more than 1,500 ID card centers worldwide. To find the nearest center, visit the RAPIDS site locator at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home. Officials urge cardholders to call first to ensure duty hours and determine what documents are required. People must present two forms of identification and one must be an unexpired federal- or state-issued photo ID.

Veterans Health Care Legislation

Reform, transparency changes VA funding

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Carden
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Veterans Healthcare Reform and Transparency Act fundamentally changes how the Department of Veterans Affairs receives health care funding. The reform calls for appropriations a year in advance after more than two decades of regular budget delays, President Obama said from the White House East Room last October.

“Over the past two decades, the VA budget has been late almost every year, often by months,” the president said. “At this very moment, the VA is operating without a budget, making it harder for VA medical centers and clinics to deliver the care our vets need.”

President Obama said that because of budget shortfalls, new doctors, nurses and critical staff are not hired on time. New health care facilities and programs often are put on hold, leaving veterans to pay the price for the government’s neglect, he said.

“This is inexcusable. It’s unacceptable. It’s time for it to stop,” he said. “And that’s just what we’ll do with this landmark legislation.”

The law gives the VA more funding predictability so officials can better budget their needs, recruit better-trained professionals and upgrade equipment. Mostly, President Obama said, the law gives veterans better access to quality care.

“In short, this is common-sense reform,” he said. “It promotes accountability at the VA. It ensures oversight by Congress. It is fiscally responsible by not adding a dime to the deficit, and it ensures that veterans’ health care will no longer be held hostage to the annual budget battles in Washington.

“Keeping faith with our veterans is work that is never truly done,” he continued. “Today’s veterans expect and deserve the highest quality care, as will tomorrow’s veterans, especially our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

invested in mobile clinics to give veterans in rural areas better access, and cited the VA and Pentagon’s work to develop a single health care record for servicemembers to make their transition out of the military a simpler process.

President Obama also vowed to end homelessness among veterans and praised the success of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which offers qualified veterans better opportunities to attain higher education and training.

“All told, we have made the biggest commitment to veterans, the largest percentage increase

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All told, we have made the biggest commitment to veterans, the largest percentage increase in the VA budget in more than 30 years.

As a nation, we’ll pledge to fulfill our responsibilities to our veterans, because our commitment to our veterans is a sacred trust, and upholding that trust is a moral obligation.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
White House East Room

”

President Obama pledged his administration would continue efforts to build a 21st-century VA. Since he has taken office, the White House, VA and Pentagon have been working to “cut the red tape and backlogs,” he said.

He noted the administration has

in the VA budget in more than 30 years,” he said. “As a nation, we’ll pledge to fulfill our responsibilities to our veterans, because our commitment to our veterans is a sacred trust, and upholding that trust is a moral obligation.” (Courtesy of American Forces Press Service)

2010 budget, NDAA affect retirees

A key highlight of the National Defense Authorization Act was the cancellation of the Tricare Standard inpatient fee increases originally announced by Pentagon officials; however, before signing the bill, proposed Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependent Indemnity Compensation offsets were eliminated, along with expanded Concurrent Receipt for Chapter 61 Retirees.

Under House and Senate budget rules, Congress must offset increases in mandatory spending with cuts in other entitlement programs or increased revenues. Although the House included offsets sufficient to authorize nine months, those offsets did not comply with Senate budget rules and could not be included. Listed below are a summary of highlights in the budget.

Increased Funding, Expansion of Benefits

⇒ Increases funding for Veterans Affairs by \$25 billion above the baseline over the next five years. President Obama's budget takes the first step toward increasing funding for the VA by \$25 billion during the next five years in order to honor the nation's veterans and expand the services they receive.

⇒ Dramatically increases funding for VA health care. This funding also enables the VA to create centers of excellence and provides additional veteran-oriented specialty care in areas including prosthetics, vision and spinal cord injury, aging and women's health.

⇒ Restores health care eligibility for modest-income veterans. The president's budget expands eligibility for the VA health care to non-disabled veterans earning modest incomes.

⇒ Enhances outreach and services related to mental health care and cognitive injuries with a focus on access for veterans in rural areas. VA will increase the number of vet centers and mobile health clinics to expand access to mental health screening and treatment in rural areas. In addition, new funding will help veterans and their families to stay informed of these resources and encourage them to pursue needed care.

⇒ Retired Reservists can now enroll in Tricare

Standard before reaching age 60, as long as they agree to pay the entire Tricare Standard premium.

Technology for Improved Service Delivery

Invests in better technology to deliver services and benefits to veterans with the quality and efficiency they deserve.

Through improved electronic medical records, the VA will more efficiently retrieve active-duty health records from the Department of Defense and enable all VA care sites to access the records of veterans needing care.

Comprehensive Educational Benefits

Facilitates timely implementation of the comprehensive education benefits veterans earn through their dedicated service. This budget provides the resources for effective implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill -- providing unprecedented levels of educational support to the men and women who have served our country through active military duty.

Reserve Retired Pay

Under Section 642 of the law, if a member of the Retired Reserve is recalled to an active status in the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve and completes not less than two years of service, the member is entitled to the re-computation of retired pay and, if a commissioned officer, adjustment in the retired grade.

Section 643 of the law provides that a retiree who attained eligibility for a regular retirement has the option of electing to receive retired pay as a non-regular retiree after performing service in an active Reserve status.

The president's budget expands the VA's current services to homeless veterans through a collaborative pilot program with nonprofit organizations. This pilot will help to maintain stable housing for veterans who are at risk of falling into homelessness while helping the VA to continue providing them with supportive services. (Courtesy of Army *Echoes*)