



JEFFERSON BARRACKS SATELLITE RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSWIRE AUGUST 2009

The staff of the Jefferson Barracks Satellite Retiree Activities Office publishes this NEWSWIRE. This publication is designed to directly inform all military retirees, spouses, widows, widowers and their families of changes to their benefits, the status of current legislation impacting their retirement, health related information and of activities at Scott AFB and Jefferson Barracks AFS.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR AUGUST

13 August Thursday—1300 Hours, Scott RAO monthly council meeting: Located at 215 Heritage Drive, Building P-10, Room A-209. Instead of our normal monthly meeting, a special training session on “Equal Opportunity” will be held in addition to gathering your submissions of potential candidate(s) and/or recommendation of a “ new Director for the Scott RAO. Duration of this special session is approximately two and a half hours. Please be prompt.

20 August Thursday - Monthly luncheon 1100 Hrs. **O’Charley’s 4130 Rusty Rd. St Louis, MO 63128** (314) 845-8200. The restaurant is located just north of South County Costco Store, Lindbergh Blvd and Rusty Rd.

Up Coming Events

19&20 September – Scott Air Show at Scott Air Force Base, IL More Information will be forth coming.

26 September – Annual Retiree Appreciation Day, Scott AFB, IL in the Scott Club. With the increased security requirements it would be helpful if the Scott Personnel knew you were planning to attend; so to show our appreciation for the hard work that the Scott Personnel do in putting on this program, please pre-register by completing the reservation form that was in the Summer 2009 Military Retiree Report and mail to: Retiree Activities Office, 215 Heritage Drive, Scott AFB IL, 62225-5009 before September 18. If you do not have the reservation form there are additional copies at the Jefferson Barracks SRAO. If you still cannot pre-register, you can do so at the door at 0700.

Important Notice for I.D. Card Section at Lambert/St Louis

The I.D. system at Lambert/St Louis ANG Station will be out of service from 23 July through 17 August.

I.D. Card Service at Lambert will be available at the Naval Reserve Center during the time that ANG will be out of service. Building 100, Room 143. Telephone # 314-263-6493 or 263-6114, Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday 0900-1130 and 1330-1600 Hours.

Be aware that the Base Security at Lambert Field might be using the new system of ID check by scanning the Bar code on the back your ID card. This system will check DEERS for ID validity and will also check Wants and Warrants with the criminal Justice System (WOW).

Impact of Health Reform on TRICARE Beneficiaries, Veterans

The absence of details surrounding healthcare reform legislation being considered by Congress has understandably left many military retirees and veterans concerned. Many of these plans are works in progress, and it is unclear how they will affect military beneficiaries and users of VA's healthcare system.

Several lawmakers are working to ensure TRICARE beneficiaries and veterans are not adversely affected by the reform effort. They include Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) who on Tuesday successfully attached an amendment to the House version of the health reform bill (H.R. 3200) which passed out of the Education and Labor Committee.

According to Rep. Wilson, "The purpose of this amendment is to shield the men and women of our Armed Forces from onerous mandates and possible coverage deterioration as a result of this bill's complex new health care governing scheme. Specifically, I believe we must exempt TRICARE from the "pay or play" employer mandate and other benefit mandates that would place an additional burden on this program that serves military personnel and their families."

Another representative maneuvering to protect military and healthcare benefits is Rep. Glenn Nye (D-VA), author of a letter to congressional leaders insisting that veterans and military healthcare benefits must not be taxed or reduced to help pay for health care reform. "We're not going to pay for healthcare reform on the backs of our troops and veterans," said Congressman Nye. 40 Members of Congress signed Nye's bipartisan letter.

One danger lurking within each of the proposals is the potential for sharp cuts in Medicare Physician Reimbursements. Deep cuts in the physician reimbursement rates, would likely cause a number of doctors either to reduce the number of Medicare and TRICARE patients or to refuse seeing them altogether. Should that happen, military retirees, particularly TRICARE for Life beneficiaries could suddenly find access to care sharply curtailed. NAUS is acutely aware of the ramifications should a rate cut occur and staunchly opposes any effort that reduces the value and effectiveness of military and veteran health benefits.

Courtesy; National Association of Uniformed Services

Editors Note: We suggest that do to the seriousness of this issue that all current and future military retirees write to their elected representatives and asked them not to change our present health care to cover the proposed New Health Care Package.

TRICARE for Life Battle

For those of you that are Military Retirees, you may want to consider reading the message below.

Whether you're retired, or will be one day I highly encourage you to follow the recommendation of BG Bob Clements (Ret) and contact your government officials to let them know you oppose the reduction of your TRICARE benefits.

This is a "Heads Up" on a battle we are facing now and down the road. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has already drafted proposed legislation that would reduce our TRICARE for Life benefits to a system whereby we pay deductibles and co-pays up to \$6,301 the first year for you and your spouse, with future years being indexed to increase with inflation.

What can we do? The article below, obtained from an Air Force Association and written by BG Bob Clements, best describes what we can do. Please read it, check the links for CBO language, and do what Bob says-Send this email to every Military Retiree you know and write and email your Congressman often.

TRICARE FOR LIFE'S FUTURE.... TRICARE For Life was instituted to correct the broken promise that military retirees would receive free healthcare coverage for life and it covers the Medicare co-pay.

Now a heavy assault has begun on Veterans/Retirees' benefits to pay for other programs. The one item of most interest to Retired Military is in Article 189. If approved by Congress the first assault wave would hit in 2011 and would hit hard. It would initiate cost sharing to require retirees to pay the first \$525 of medical cost and 50% of the next \$4,725 for a first year cost of \$2,888 per person. It would be indexed to increase with inflation. A reason given for this action (for PR effect) is "overuse" by Retirees.

For those of you who are covered by TFL you will want to pay attention (Below) to what BG Bob Clements has surfaced about the future of TFL.

In any case, on page 189 of the Congressional Budget Office report, see the note below on how to get to that spot; there is a strong recommendation to eventually eliminate the program, as it is too expensive. Just another move to slight those of us who dedicated much of our adult lives to the defense of our country.

Strongly recommend that you contact your elected officials and register your strong opposition to the elimination of the TFL program. Heads-up from BG Bob Clements, USAF Ret (P38 Bob) The following has been added to the Congressional Budget Office Web Site www.cbo.gov/ a. Budget, Options, Volume 1: Health Care (www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=9925)

For those who have never opened one of these web sites from OMB:

1. double click on the above URL
2. click on PDF
3. click on the binoculars
4. do a search for TFL

Now here it is folks and I will guarantee if you sit around on your behind and do nothing about it as they bring these options forward this coming year, you will lose one of the best healthcare benefits that the Medicare eligible retired military have. It is short of the promises made that we fought so hard for back in the late 90s and early 2000s but it is still the best healthcare program that anyone in the United States has, bar none

People who are professionals always look for the channel of least resistance when it comes to cutting money out of the Federal and DOD budget. I can tell you this straight on, military retirees are one of those channels of least resistance noted for sitting around, doing nothing, and waiting for ole Joe to do it for them. You had better wake up. Your medical benefits are prime target. If you lose them, you have nobody to blame but yourself. Let me repeat that ... you have nobody to blame but yourself.

The way to secure your benefits is to write to your members of Congress and to keep writing and writing and writing. ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH!! Keep repeating the above statement until you are blue in the face. Now I'm going to make one more statement to all of you younger people out there who are not yet eligible for TRICARE for Life. HEALTH CARE WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME THE DOMINATING FACTOR IN YOUR LIFE. Remember that . . . it will impact you big time with the utmost in cruelty unless you are fortunate enough to die from a heart attack or get run over by a truck. The service organizations will put up a fight, but they will need your help and can't do it by themselves. I hope this makes it clear as to what you can expect if you do nothing.

Remember- TFL is an "Earned Benefit" that's been granted by a previous Congress.

Subvention Bill Introduced

On Wednesday, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) introduced [H.R. 3365](#), a bill to allow Medicare payments to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for services provided to Medicare-eligible veterans for non-service-connected conditions. This is called Medicare Subvention and is a goal that NAUS has been working on for many years.

Passage of the Medicare Subvention bill would not only assist in the funding of the Veterans Benefits Administration, it would also ensure that veterans would be treated in world-class medical facilities for a reduced cost to Medicare, a win for all sides.

"Aid and Attendance" an Under-Used VA Benefit

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance.

"Veterans have earned this benefit by their service to our nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "We want to ensure that every veteran or surviving spouse who qualifies has the chance to apply."

Although this is not a new program, not everyone is aware of his or her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing homes or assisted-living facilities.

Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self-support and in need of regular personal assistance.

The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment.

For a wartime veteran or surviving spouse to qualify for this special monthly pension, the veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Wartime veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, (October 16, 1981, for officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were ordered to active duty.

If all requirements are met, VA determines eligibility for the Aid and Attendance benefit by adjusting for un-reimbursed medical expenses from the veteran's or surviving spouse's total household income. If the

remaining income amount falls below the annual income threshold for the Aid and Attendance benefit, VA pays the difference between the claimant's household income and the Aid and Attendance threshold.

The Aid and Attendance income threshold for a veteran without dependents is now \$18,234 annually. The threshold increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent, and by \$1,866 for each additional dependent. The annual Aid and Attendance threshold for a surviving spouse alone is \$11,715. This threshold increases to \$13,976 if there is one dependent child, and by \$1,866 for each additional child.

Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000. Applications may be submitted on-line at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. Information is also available on the Internet at www.va.gov or from any local veterans service organization.

Retiree Hearing Aid Assistance Program:

The Military Audiology Association is providing information on their Web site - www.militaryaudiology.org/rachap/state.html regarding military hospitals that provide a hearing aid service available to retirees at a fraction of the normal cost. The extent of the service provided at these military hospitals is listed on the Military Audiology Association's Web site. <http://militaryaudiology.org/site/aids/>

Appointments are necessary and transportation to and from these clinics is at the expense of the patient. Not all military hospitals currently provide this service.

An example of the cost for a set of hearing aids (one of the best available) retailing at approximately \$6,000 can cost a retiree as low as \$800 - fifteen percent of the retail cost. There is generally no cost for the hearing evaluation, the fittings or the programming of the hearing aids.

Contact the preferred servicing clinic, listed on the web site, for an appointment and details of their program.

At this time dependents of military retirees are generally ineligible to participate in this program.

12 Nations Activate Groundbreaking Heavy Airlift Wing

by Maj. Cristin Marposon
U.S. Air Forces in Europe Public Affairs

7/27/2009 - **PAPA AIR BASE, Hungary (AFNS)** -- Senior diplomatic and defense officials representing 12 nations as well as NATO witnessed July 27 the official activation of a first-of-its-kind multinational strategic airlift unit at Pápa Air Base, Hungary.

"I want to extend my thanks to all of the nations that chose to participate in SAC," said Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, NATO deputy secretary general, referring to the Strategic Airlift Capability program formalized 2006. "Because of your commitment, today we are well-positioned to provide aid anywhere, at any time, and on any mission - humanitarian, disaster relief, or peacekeeping."

The nations committed to the 30-year SAC Program built the program's multinational operational-level unit, known as the Heavy Airlift Wing or HAW, in just 10 months. The purpose was to collectively create a heavy airlift solution with global reach to meet national obligations to the European Union, United Nations and NATO. Primary among those obligations for all the participants is support to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

"In building this program, the twelve nations forged an unshakable bond," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Richard Johnston, chairman of the SAC Steering Board. "Today, this unshakable bond is gathered here at Pápa to celebrate a significant milestone in military aviation. This is your day, your nation's day, and each and every nation should be proud to have brought this vision to reality."

The SAC program, which will operate independently of NATO's military command, includes NATO member nations Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and the United States, as well as Partnership for Peace nations Finland and Sweden.

The nations' varying investments in the SAC Program dictate their proportionate share of the annual flying hours on three jointly acquired Boeing C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. The first C-17, SAC 01, landed at Pápa AB July 18 under the control of HAW pilots from Norway, Sweden and the U.S. Boeing will deliver SAC's two remaining C-17s in September and October.

Each nation also contributed a proportionate share of the unit's 131 personnel.

"For nearly a year now, airmen from 12 nations have worked as a team here in Pápa, blending their varied skills, military experiences and cultures into a new form of multinational military unit," explained the HAW's first commander, U.S. Air Force Col. John Zazworsky, in his multinational capacity.

"The team has consistently focused on being able to conduct strategic airlift missions as soon as the first aircraft was delivered. Now that we have reached that milestone, we have the strong sense that we are creating a model for future cooperative military efforts."

SAC 01 will begin operational missions in support of the nations' requirements in early August and anticipates flying roughly 630 hours before the end of 2009 and more than 3,100 flying hours in 2010, all of which will be flown by multinational aircrews regardless of the nation to which the mission belongs

Many of the already-scheduled missions will fulfill the participating nations' commitments to ISAF. A typical mission transporting troops, mechanized firepower and oversized equipment weighing tens of tons from Pápa to Afghanistan and back requires roughly 15 flight hours.

The Republic of Hungary plays a significant role in the SAC program as host to the main operating base of the newly activated HAW and to its personnel and their families. It will also register the SAC aircraft, the tail flash of which presents the nation's flag in stripes of red, white and green.

To facilitate the HAW's mission, the Hungarian air force will manage the Pápa airfield, air traffic control operations and base infrastructure support. A Boeing team assigned to Pápa AB will provide material management, flight line maintenance and other support for the wing's C-17s. And the NATO Airlift Management Agency or NAMA, an organization of roughly three dozen individuals, will handle acquisition, logistics support and financial matters.

According to SAC officials, the program's approach to shared use of strategic airlift assets allows participating nations to achieve greater efficiencies in defense investment and operational capacity than otherwise possible.

Furthermore, the program provides a model for future consortium acquisition and management of expensive defense capabilities and for future combined operations.

Editor's Note: We thought this article to be interesting and could result with a boost in our aircraft-manufacturing sector. Keeping high paid jobs.

Mayonnaise Jar & Two Beers...

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 Beers.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly.

The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar.

Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He asked once more if the jar was full.

The students responded with a unanimous 'yes.'

The professor then produced two Beers from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand.

The students laughed..

'Now,' said the professor as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life.

The golf balls are the important things---your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favorite passions---and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car.

The sand is everything else---the small stuff.

'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls.

The same goes for life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.

Spend time with your children.

Spend time with your parents.

Visit with grandparents.

Take time to get medical checkups.

Take your spouse out to dinner.

Play another 18..

There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal.

Take care of the golf balls first---the things that really matter.

Set your priorities.

The rest is just sand.

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the Beer represented.

The professor smiled and said, 'I'm glad you asked.'

The Beer just shows you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of Beers with a friend.

Things to Remember

Good judgment comes from bad experience ... and most of that comes from bad judgment

Note to Our Readers: The Newswire will at times provide links to web sites for additional information. To our readers who receive the Newswire via the U.S. Postal Service, you are not getting full use of this publication. We strongly recommend that you have the Newswire sent to you via e-mail. For those readers who do not have Internet access you can come visit us at Building 65 Jefferson Barracks. We would be happy to download and print a copy of any information that you may need. See our office hours at the heading of this publication. Your local library also has computers for patrons to use to gain access to the Internet.

STILL SERVING

73, Jerry

Gerald B Hansen, CMSGT, USAF, (Ret)
Director, JBSRAO

Contact Us:

JBSRAO

Telephone: 314 527-8212

E-mail:

Address JBSRAO, One Grant Rd
St. Louis, MO 63125

Scott RAO

Telephone: 618 256-5092

E-mail: scottrao@scott.af.mil

Address: 375 AW/CVR
215 Heritage Dr
Scott AFB, IL 62225-5009

**Office hours are 0900 to 1200 hours Tuesday and Thursday.
On the 2nd and 3rd Thursdays the office will be closed at
1100 Hrs for the staff to attend Scott Retiree Council meeting
and monthly luncheon.**

Office Hours are 0900-1300 Hrs Monday - Friday

NEWSWIRE AUGUST 2009

Disclaimer: Information and views expressed in the Newswire may not reflect the practices and policies of some Government Agencies. Every effort is made to verify information provided in this publication, the SRAO staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of this furnished by other agencies.