



Touching Base

A Newsletter by the Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida
(813) 828-4555



www.macdill.af.mil - Click on Units, Click on RetireeActivities

OCTOBER 2009

LOCATION and PHONE NUMBER:

The MacDill Air Force Base Retiree Activities Office (RAO), 813-828-4555, is located between the Commissary and the Main Base Exchange. A Satellite Facility is located in the Food Court of the Main Base Exchange. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 0900-1500.

RAO MISSION:

Responsible for assisting Retired Military Personnel, their family members, and their survivors in identifying, applying for, establishing, and receiving entitlements resulting from the member's military service. We assist individuals in the solution of difficulties arising from receipt or non-receipt of entitlements and also provide assistance in Federal Income Tax preparation and submission.

Our customers are American service members and their dependents. They have earned our respect, and their retirement income, by dedicating their lives to the defense of the United States of America. They are entitled to the fulfillment of the contract drawn with our country. They have sweated and bled in distant lands, foregone the stability and pleasures of family life, and followed the orders given them without regard to personal cost. They should take great pride in their accomplishments. We take great pride in assuring their contract is fulfilled. We owe them superb service, respect and open communication.

IN MEMORIAM:

Chief Master Sergeant Henry (Hank) L. Counts, joined the Lord on 14 July 2009, at the age of 82. In addition to 30 years active duty service, Chief Counts served as a volunteer at MacDill AFB as Deputy Director of the Retiree Activities Office for 32 years, and as an intermittent volunteer at the Base Chapel during this same period. He will be remembered for his boundless dedication to God, his love of family and country, the joy he received when helping members of the military community, and that ever present smile. You will be missed ... your 62 years of service to your country and the MacDill AFB community is unrivaled!

LT COL GLENN EGGLESTON (Col "E"):

The RAO volunteers would like to express their appreciation and heartfelt appreciation to Col "E", who retired from the RAO for health reasons. As Director of the RAO (a volunteer position) since 1993, he was instrumental in initiating and maintaining the "No Charge" Volunteer IRS Income Tax Preparation Program. He also was responsible for maintaining a Retiree Information Center which apprised military retirees, their family members, and survivors of entitlements resulting from the retiree's years of service. During the period of his service and as a direct result of his planning and leadership, the RAO received many awards and citations and is considered one of the top RAO's in the Air Force. *Thanks Col "E", you will be missed and in our prayers.*

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY:

Col Larry Martin, 6 AMW/CC has designated Saturday, November 14, 2009, as Retiree Appreciation Day. A health fair will be held in the medical building, and information booths will be available in the Main Base Exchange Food Court. Legal assistance will be available on an appointment basis – call 828-4422. The Casualty Assistance Office will review retiree's pay records and ID Cards will be renewed in building 373. The Base Dining Facility will provide a pay-as-you-go brunch between 0730-1300 hours.

Booths in the Base Exchange Food Court will include information on casualty assistance, survivor benefits, space-a-travel, family services, and recreation services. Representatives of the following organizations may also be there to explain membership benefits: Military Officers Association of America, Retired Enlisted Association, National Association for Uniformed Services, and the Society of Military Widows, etc.

SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE CHECKLIST:

The most effective means of demonstrating your concern for your family's welfare is to ensure they have information easily available, after your death, to settle your affairs and apply for their entitlements as your survivor(s). The Survivor Assistance; Checklists (pages 9&10) if completed, and documents noted on the checklist are accumulated prior to your death; will assist in

providing the information they need and the documents required for your survivor(s) to complete the necessary administrative processes.

This office has assisted numerous survivors, not in possession of this information, resulting in a hardship on them due to the delay experienced in settling your affairs and receiving their entitlements. By completing this checklist you will have saved your bereaved loved ones the hardship of locating this information at the time of your death. Remember – benefits are not paid to survivors automatically—survivors must report the death of the retiree and apply for their benefits in order to receive their entitlements.

Should you have any questions, please contact your local Retiree Activities Office. For those not residing close to a military installation, information is available on the reverse side of the checklist which lists central national contacts.

Also attached is a document listing “Things to know and/or plan for upon the death of a retiree” (page 11). This document can be used, prior to your death, in planning and reviewing your efforts, on behalf of your survivor(s).

SOME RETIREES WILL NO LONGER PAY SBP PREMIUMS

Effective October 1, 2008, SBP participants who reach 70 years of age and have made 360 payments (30 years), will no longer pay premiums for continued SBP coverage and will be placed in “Paid-up SBP” status (increase in retirement pay, by the amount of previously withheld SBP premium, will be noticeable). No action is required of SBP participants to be placed in Paid-up SBP status. Once the eligibility criteria has been met, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will automatically stop deducting premiums from qualifying military retired pay accounts. If you meet these criteria and payments continue to be deducted contact the Finance Center at 1-800-321-1080.

Pharmacare Refill Center Drive-Through

Completed March 2009, the Pharmacare addition has provided an additional 7,200 square feet to the existing structure. This has allowed the consolidation of the BX Pharmacy with the Pharmacare Center. Prescription pickup at the BX pharmacy was discontinued on 15 June 2009 and has been transferred to the Pharmacare Center Drive-Through. Prescription pickup will now be via 3 drive-up lanes. (*Active duty military in uniform have the option of walking into the Pharmacare center for new and refill pickup so they may return to duty as quickly as possible.*) *Patients that ride the Hart-Line Bus or those with any handicap may also come into the Pharmacare Center for service.*

The following will help reduce waiting times for patients:

Large vehicles and RVs should use the far right lane (lane 3), however all vehicles can use this lane; *all three lanes are open daily*

- Have ID cards and yellow Third Party Insurance cards ready when you arrive at the window/tube system
- Please pick up prescriptions within 7 business days
- Stay in your vehicle, *DO NOT WALK INTO TRAFFIC OR IN THE DRIVE THROUGH LANES, THIS IS VERY HAZARDOUS*

NOTE: BUSIEST DAYS FOR THE DRIVE-THROUGH ARE WEDS/THURS, 1000- 1400

These improvements are important as the 6 MDG Pharmacy is the second busiest pharmacy in the Air Mobility Command, filling a total of 590K prescriptions annually. The Pharmacare Refill Center will refill about 216K of those prescriptions. This new service will alleviate the need for customers to stand in line to pick up prescriptions.

DOD PHARMACY MAIL-IN PHARMACY

Using the Mail-in Pharmacy, rather than a local pharmacy (Walgreens, etc.) can save you two thirds of the cost of your medications. Your local pharmacy charges \$3, \$4, or \$22 for a 30 day supply. The Mail-in Pharmacy charges an identical amount for a 90 day supply, thus your two thirds savings. The military also realizes saving by you using the Mail-in Pharmacy. To register and receive your prescription from the Mail-in Pharmacy (Express Scripts) call 1-866-363-8667.

PRESCRIPTION DROP BOX

The MacDill AFB Pharmacy has installed a drop-off box for *new* prescriptions at the Base Exchange (BX) Food Court Refill Pharmacy. This allows patients the option of dropping off new prescriptions when the Pharmacare Center is closed or during peak business hours. There is also a drop box located in the Pharmacare Center for those unable to wait.

Prescriptions placed in the drop box will be available for pick up the second duty day after drop off. Medications will be available for pickup seven days after drop off. It is important that the prescriptions are legible and the patients print the following information on each prescription:

- Patients full name and phone number
- Patients address
- Patients date of birth
- Sponsor’s Social Security Number

This process is NOT to be used to request refills. Refills should be requested by calling 1-800-272-0201.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Yellow Fever, Mononucleosis, and Typhoid immunizations will only be administered for deployment purposes (DOD, and all activated military) due to shortage in supply. Individuals 65 yrs and older, with a prescription from their physician, will be administered the life time pneumonia shot. For high risks patients under 65 yrs old a prescription indicating they are high risk and require a pneumonia shot is required. Shingles immunizations may be administered to candidates 60 yrs of age and older, with a prescription. For further information and availability of immunizations contact the clinic at 813-827-9375.

“Serving those who served”

ID CARD RENEWAL APPOINTMENTS:

Don't wait in a long line to renew your ID Card; call the ID Card Office at (813)828-1988 and make an appointment. You will be seen at the appointed time.

MISSING DOCUMENTS:

Missing documents and information (i.e. DD Form 214, medals awarded, etc) can be obtained by submitting a Standard Form 180 directly to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) or visiting the RAO web site which will link you to the NPRC web site www.vetrecs.archives.gov. You can obtain a Standard Form 180 at any Retiree Activities Office or Veterans Administration facility.

MACDILL FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER-BRANDON

The Airman and Family Readiness Center located @ 710 Oakfield Drive, Suite 153, Brandon, FL (inside the Credit Union Service Center building) provides many services. A few of the services offered are Retiree Activities Representative, Legal assistance, FREE computer classes, employment assistance, Chaplain Services, Income Tax Consultation, and more. For more information you can access their website @ www.macdillfrc.com or call 813-655-9281.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MY "OL BUDDY?"

To locate Air Force retirees or active duty members: (Locator service is not available to find Airmen who served but were separated without retirement.)

- Write a letter to the person you are attempting to locate.
- Seal it in a stamped envelope.
- Enter your return address (including retired grade) on the stamped envelope.
- Enclose the letter in an envelope addressed to HQ/AFPC/DPDXIDL, 550 C Street West Ste 50, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4752 with a note indicating the full name, grade, SSN or service number of individual to be located. AFPC will forward your enclosed letter to the individual for his response directly to you.

SPACE AVAILABLE TRAVEL:

Eligibility:

- Military Retirees, including retired Reservists/Guard drawing benefits, presenting a valid Retiree Identification Card.
- Family of the above with a valid Identification Card, if of eligibility age for an ID card. Must be accompanied by sponsor.

Registration:

- Fax your registration to (813) 828-7844 [DSN 968-7844].or e-mail to spacea@macdill.af.mil
- Register at www.pepperd.com (an unofficial site which allows registration at Air Force Bases – worldwide). You must register with each base separately. Registration is good for 60 days, after 60 days you must re-register.)
- In person at the Passenger Terminal located in Building 90, MacDill AFB.
- The following information must be furnished:
 - 1) Name (Last, First, MI); 2) Rank; 3) SSN; 4) Number of Seats Required; 5) Branch of Service; 6) Date Leave Starts and completes (Active Duty Only); 7) Country of Choices (or "all"); 8) Name of Dependents traveling with you, including their SSN; 9) Emergency Contact with Name with telephone number.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:

NOTE TO RETIREES AND ANNUITANTS: Please DO NOT send change of address information to this office.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the agency responsible for maintaining and changing correspondence addresses for retired members and recipients of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities who may receive correspondence, including the Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel, from official Air Force agencies.

There are several ways to change address information. Please note that the web sites are not linked but, for those with computers and Internet access: "MyPay" users may do so on the Internet by going to <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> entering their personal identification number and then changing their correspondence address. Because there are other changes that can be made electronically, retired members and annuitants are encouraged to go this route. Those without a PIN should use the same Web site and request a PIN which will be sent through the mail within a short time. Another way is to go to Customer Inquiry Request by clicking on <https://ca.dtic.mil/dfas/s-retired/ret1-pay.htm>. The nature of the inquiry would be "Change of Address."

Individuals without computers:

Retirees 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, PO Box 7130, London KY 40742-7130 or you may call toll free (800) 321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5534. The fax number is (800) 469-6559. Include your Social Security number and sign your request when mailing or faxing.

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 but who are receiving DIC in lieu of the SBP) must send a change of address to: DFAS, U.S. Military Annuitant Pay, PO Box 7131, London KY 40742-7131. The toll free number (800) 321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5534. The fax number is (800) 982-8459. If mailing or faxing, include your and the deceased sponsor's Social Security number and sign the request.

AIR FORCE HAS A WEB SITE AND TELEPHONE NEWS LINE FOR RETIREES/SURVIVORS:

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas (AFRNS) – The Air Force has a telephone and Web site just for its retiree community that is full of news and information, plus it is easy to access and navigate. The web site is located at www.retirees.af.mil. For those without computers call toll free (800) 558-1404 to stay informed by using this easy-to-use menu-driven service.

The public sites offer the retirees family community in-depth information on the Survivor Benefit Plan, plus a list of Air Force Retiree Activities Offices worldwide and various other resources. There are also sections dedicated to the Afterburner and Air Force Retiree News Service. Managing electronic subscriptions to the electronic version of the Afterburner and AFRNS is now much easier: just click on the word “Subscribe” found on the top navigation bar and unsubscribe an old address and then add a new one when a change is needed.

HAVE YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS FAXED TO PHARMACARE: Prescriptions (other than Controlled Drugs) may be faxed to Pharmicare directly from the Doctor’s Office to the center at 813-828-0088. They must contain the doctor’s printed name, signature, contact information, DEA Nr., and be computer generated or typed and include the patient’s full name, date of birth, phone number, and last 4 digits of the sponsor’s SSN.

DEERS PERSONAL DATA UPDATE

- **In Person:** To add or delete family members, visit a local ID card office. Call the office first to verify location and business hours. (MacDill – 813-828-2278)
- **By Phone:** Call the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at **1-800-538-9552** to update your addresses, e-mail address and phone numbers. (TTY/TDD for the deaf: **1-866-363-2883**) **By Fax:** Fax address, e-mail address or phone number changes to the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at **1-831-655-8317**.
- **By Mail:** Mail changes to the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office. You must also mail supporting documentation if you are adding or deleting a family member:
- Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office
Attn: COA
400 Gigling Road
Seaside CA 93955-6771

Special note to retired members, SBP annuitants and non annuitants: There may be other agencies you should contact to change your address such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, and Medicare whose toll free numbers are as follows: **Medicare** – 1-800-633-4227; **Social Security** – 1-800-772-1213; **Veterans Administration** - 1-800-827-1000

CONDUCT DURING HOISTING, LOWERING OR PASSING OF FLAG:

“During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, those present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.” The National Americanism Commission offers the following guidance as to how veterans should now conduct themselves in view of the new law: *“The law does allow veterans to render the right hand salute, but does not mandate it.* If you feel uncomfortable, the traditional right hand over the heart is still an alternative.”

VEHICLE DECALS:

Although MacDill does not require vehicle decals, they are available upon request at the Visitors’ Reception Facility (VRF) located on Dale Mabry Highway. Retirees visiting installations operated by other military services (Army, Navy, etc.), which require decals for entrance and do not have a decal must go to the visitors center and receive a visitors pass prior to entrance.

ARE YOU A VOLUNTEER?

If so, you already know how rewarding it is. You also know how many activities and programs that could *not* exist; within our military community; were it not for the volunteers doing the work to make them happen.

If you are not a volunteer; and have been looking for a creative and rewarding way to spend your free time; then consider volunteering and contact our MacDill Volunteer Coordinator through the Airman and Family Readiness Center at 813-828-2721. Don’t allow the lack of experience, in your area of interest, hinder your volunteering – training is available and will be provided. Opportunities abound for you to help others in our military community!

NOTE: *Volunteers are needed at this RAO to counsel and assist our retirees and their survivors.* Call 813-828-4555.

TRICARE RETIREE DENTAL PROGRAM (TRDP):

TRDP is administered by Delta Dental of California and is the most comprehensive dental benefit program available to Uniformed Service Retirees and their family members. This program offers dental coverage throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, America Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Canada. All premiums are paid by the enrollee and premiums vary depending upon where the enrollee lives. For more information about the TRDP, beneficiaries may call toll-free at 1-888-838-8737, or visit Delta Dental online at www.trdp.org.

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE WEB SITE ADDRESS:

The RAO web site is located at - www.macdill.af.mil. Upon entering the MacDill AFB site click on "Units" then "Retiree Activities" - on the lower right side - which will link you to the RAO site. This site provides a copy of this newsletter and a central address link to the following:

- The Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) (Includes copies of the "Afterburner")
- DEERS
- The most current MacDill AFB Pharmacy Formulary
- TRICARE Mail-in Pharmacy (Express-Scripts)
- Medicare
- My Pay (DFAS)
- National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)
- Social Security Administration
- Air Force Space Available Travel registration
- TRICARE
- U.S. Congressional web site
- The Veterans Administration (VA)
- Retiree "Hearing Aid" Assistance Program
- Army Retirement Services

The following websites have information of interest and may be subscribed to receive periodic news and entitlement updates:

- Air Force Retiree News Service: (To subscribe, unsubscribe or change your AFRNS e-mail address, send an e-mail message to lyris@afpclist.afpc.randolph.af.mil. **TO SUBSCRIBE:** Type in Subscribe AFRNS in the subject line of an e-mail. Do not type anything in the text block, just hit send.)
- Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs News Letter: (www.floridavets.org/news/newsletter.asp)
- All Service Military Report: (www.military.com)
- Official web site of the U.S. Air Force: (www.af.mil/news)

FILING A CLAIM WITH THE VA?

When filing a claim with the VA it is important to designate a Veterans Service Organization (AMVETS, DAV, AMERICAN LEGION, VFW, etc.) to represent you. This entails completing a Power of Attorney, which authorizes your representative, with expertise in VA Laws and procedures, to act in your behalf (at no cost to you) in prosecuting your claim.

TAX ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY

Tax assistance will be provided again this coming tax season in the RAO beginning the first Monday of February. Appointments are available, if desired, by calling 813-828-0248; on or after *January 11, 2010*.

The RAO will have 5 computers preparing tax returns and will provide electronic filing wherein refunds can be expected within approximately two weeks. This service is offered free of charge to retirees, spouses and active duty families.

The program is sponsored by the Staff Judge Advocate and is operated under the supervision of the RAO. Tax preparers are trained under the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program and are certified by the IRS for performance at a level commensurate with most retirees' incomes.

Walk-in service will be provided five days per week beginning Feb 1, 2010. Operating hours are 0900-1400. NOTE: Active duty ***in uniform*** are given walk-in priority over other walk-in customers between 0900-1100. If the RAO did not prepare your 2008 return, you should bring a copy of the return you filed for that year.

2009 AIR FORCE RETIREE COUNCIL MEETING:

The following issues were supported by the 2009 ROA Council meeting and forwarded to the Department of the Air Force for their consideration and support; realizing some of these issues require legislative action. The Council Representative for the MacDill area is Colonel Billy Graham, USAF (Retired) a member of the MacDill RAO and can be contacted through the MacDill RAO.

MEDICAL CARE ISSUES

Subject: DOD has recommended increases in health care cost sharing for retired families by:

- Raising the \$460 family TRICARE Prime enrollment fee as high as \$2,090.
- Raising annual \$300 family TRICARE standard fees as high as \$1,270.
- Establishing an annual \$120 enrollment fee per person for TRICARE for Life (TFL).
- Raising retail pharmacy co pays for all from \$3 generic/\$9 brand, \$22 non-formulary to \$15/\$25/\$45

More Recently DOD's above recommendations have been under review and less severe fee hikes have been recommended.

- Raising fees for under 65. TRICARE Prime fees be tied to the percentage of Medicare Part B Premium raise. TRICARE Standard deductible would be raised by an amount sufficient to provide the same relative level of beneficiary cost-sharing.
- Tiering/Mean-testing: Setting different tiers of fees based on retiree's family adjusted gross income.

- Pharmacy Co pays: Proposed eliminating co pays for generic and brand name formulary medications purchased through the mail-order pharmacy system. For local retail (Walgreens, etc.) \$4 for generic vs. current \$3; \$20 for brand name, vs. \$9; \$30 for non-formulary medications, vs. \$22.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) offered 115 options some reducing, some increasing federal spending on health care. Including options are:

- Change TRICARE for Life to cover the first \$525 of Medicare-eligible military annual cost-share and cover only half of next \$4,725.
- Raise TRICARE Prime fees for military under age 65 to \$550 (single) and \$1,100 (family).
- Raise TRICARE Standard deductibles to \$350 (single), \$700 (family); plus an annual enrollment fee of \$50 (single); \$100 (family), plus additional charges for those who use military health facilities.

Council Action: The Retiree Counsel requests the CSAF ensure service members' families, retirees and their families and survivors are protected against disproportionate increases in TRICARE fees and copayments. The council recommends that TRICARE fees be increased by no more than the annual rate of Cost of Living adjustments (COLA) increase and retain the fees that are uniform across the TRICARE Program.

Subject: TRICARE Overseas for Medicare-Eligible Retired Beneficiaries.

Military Medicare-eligible retired beneficiaries residing overseas are denied their Medicare benefits because Medicare does not pay for health care outside the United States and its territories, but are required to Medicare premiums for Part B (\$94.60) to be eligible for TRICARE standard, which does pay overseas.

Council Action: The council recommends that the Medicare Part B premium be waived while a Medicare-eligible beneficiary is residing overseas with the beneficiary remaining eligible for TRICARE Standard. That should the beneficiary return as a resident of the U.S. a provision for enrolling in Medicare Part B be included without penalties. The council believes this issue warrants the attention of the AF Military Personnel Department (AFMPC), in coordination with AF/SG, and requests further study to resolve a significant inequity borne by these beneficiaries residing overseas.

Subject: Frame of Choice (FOC) spectacle program provides active duty members with an alternative to current standard issue military spectacles.

Council Action: The Council previously requested that SG make the civilian style FOC available to retirees at cost (approximately \$10). To date the council has not been advised of any action. The council will gratefully remind the SG that he agreed to relook.

Subject: Declining participation of Medicare providers. Threatened cuts in Medicare reimbursements have caused many providers to stop accepting new Medicare and TFL patients. In January 2010 rates will be cut 21 percent unless corrective action is taken.

Council Action: Requests AFMPC, in coordination with OASD/Health Affairs, support legislation that will overturn the Center for Medicare Services' (CMS) proposal to reduce Medicare payments to providers by 21 percent in January 2010.

PAY ISSUES

Subject: Allow military members/annuitants to pay health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. Many federal and military retirees pay premiums for a variety of health insurance programs. For the vast majority of military retirees and annuitants these health benefit plan premiums are not tax-deductible because their health care expenses do not exceed 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross taxable income.

Council Action: The council requests AFMPC continue to seek support of H.R. 1203 (Rep Van Hollen and S. 491 (Sen. Webb) which would allow retired military members and civilian annuitants to pay their health insurance premiums of a pre-tax basis as allowed in the public and private sectors.

Subject: Reinstatement of Medical Benefits for Remarried Widow(er) s when subsequent marriages end.

Council Action: The council is grateful for the Air Forces support for this 2007 issue and requests feed-back concerning the status of this legislative and budgeting proposal.

Subject: Concurrent receipt of Survivor Benefit Plan annuities and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

Council Action: The Council strongly recommends AFMPC support legislation (S. 535 and H.R. 775) for full payment of both benefits.

Subject: Recoupment of arrears of retired pay from survivors of deceased members. It is current practice of DFAS to immediately recover the last month's retired pay upon notification of the retiree's death.

Council Action: The council recommends AFMPC favorably support H.R. 613 which would allow the retention of the full final month's retired pay by the survivors for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

Subject: Retention of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for survivors who remarry after age 55.

Council Action: The Council requests the Air Force to encourage the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit legislation to change the continuation of DIC Compensation from age 57 to age 55, upon remarriage, and support H.R. 809.

Subject: Concurrent Receipt of full retirement pay and VA disability pay.

Council Action: The Council supports the Military Coalitions action to eliminate restriction on concurrent receipt and supports legislation granting concurrent receipt to those retirees with a 10 to 40 percent VA compensation disability rating.

Subject: Equitable Enhancement to Paid-up Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Retired Reservists, who elected SBP coverage since 1978, paid increased monthly premiums through payroll deductions. Premiums were increased 12-14 percent, projected to cover SBP coverage to date of retirement.

Council Action: The council recommends AFMPC support legislation amending the law to terminate SBP premiums when these retirees reach age 70 and have paid the costs of 360 months for SBP coverage.

Subject: MyPay Allotment Transaction Problems. There is a glitch in the MyPay allotment system. In some cases the member's account may have exceeded the allowable transactions, however; MyPay will indicate that the allotment change has been accepted. DFAS will not correct this situation until the end of the month purge, but in the interim the allotment change will not have occurred and the change must be resubmitted. DFAS is aware of the problem and working on a fix, however; retirees should carefully monitor any problem with allotment changes and contact DFAS immediately if a problem exists.

Council Action: The council recommends DFAS expedite the fix and in the interim advise each retiree concerned immediately if any allotment is purged and not excepted by the DFAS system.

Subject: Retirees need enhanced service when contacting DFAS with a problem. Often retirees are desperate for assistance with pay issues and have a problem receiving assistance through the DFAS (Do not have a computer or have problems receiving a PIN). The retirees are also perplexed by the Interactive Voice Response Telephone System (IVRS) due to the length of time taken to receive a response of often told "call volumes preclude any service at this time". This often occurs when attempting to acquire a 1099R to file with the IRS.

Council Action: The council request DFAS improve and simplify the IVRS, and streamline the process to acquire a PIN via MyPay.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION STATUS UPDATE:

The following is a listing of selected Congressional Bills of interest to the military retiree community. Support of these through co-sponsorship by your congressional delegations is critical if they are to move through Congress and become law. The key to increasing co-sponsorship is in contacting your legislators and expressing your feelings and requesting their support in passing these Bills.

You can read the complete text of the Bill, determine their status, and if your legislator supports the Bill by visiting the MacDill RAO site and linking to the Congressional site or visiting the Congressional site directly at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. Upon reaching the Congressional site you may review the Bill by clicking on "Bill Number" and entering the Bill number (i.e. S.558) then click on "search". To review a listing of those with subject matter of interest to you click on "Word/Phrase" then enter the subjective text that may appear in the Bill (i.e. 'Military Retiree', 'Survivors Benefit Plan') then click on "search".

CONGRESSIONAL BILLS

H.R.303 : ***Retired Pay Restoration Act*** to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt.

Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-9] (introduced 1/8/2009) Cosponsors (79)

H.R.333 : ***Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act*** to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to eliminate the phase-in period for concurrent receipt, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Marshall, Jim [GA-8] (introduced 1/8/2009) Cosponsors (88)

H.R.484 : ***Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act*** to require the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a plan to provide chiropractic health care services and benefits for certain new beneficiaries as part of the TRICARE program.

Sponsor: Rep Rogers, Mike D. [AL-3] (introduced 1/13/2009) Cosponsors (32)

H.R.593 : ***CRSC for DoD Disability Severances Pay***. To amend title 10, United States Code, to expand the authorized concurrent receipt of disability severance pay from the Department of Defense and compensation for the same disability under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to cover all veterans who have a combat-related disability, as defined under section 1413a of such title.

Sponsor: Rep Smith, Adam [WA-9] (introduced 1/15/2009) Cosponsors (40)

H.R.613 : ***Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act*** to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for forgiveness of certain overpayments of retired pay paid to deceased retired members of the Armed Forces following their death.

Sponsor: Rep Jones, Walter B., Jr. [NC-3] (introduced 1/21/2009) Cosponsors (53)

H.R.667 : ***To improve the diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury*** in members and former members of the Armed Forces, to review and expand telehealth and telemental health programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Salazar, John T. [CO-3] (introduced 1/23/2009) Cosponsors (40)

H.R.775 : **Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act** to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan to offset the receipt of veterans dependency and indemnity compensation. Companion Bill S.535
Sponsor: Rep Ortiz, Solomon P. [TX-27] (introduced 1/28/2009) Cosponsors (250)

H.R.840: **To reduce sexual assault and domestic violence** involving members of the Armed Forces and their family members and partners through enhanced programs of prevention and deterrence, enhanced programs of victims services, and strengthened provisions for prosecution of assailants, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh [NY-28] (introduced 2/3/2009) Cosponsors (50)

H.R.1016 : **Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009** to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide advance appropriations authority for certain medical care accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Filner, Bob [CA-51] (introduced 2/12/2009) Cosponsors (121)

H.R.1203 : **Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act** to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums. Companion Bill S.491

Sponsor: Rep Van Hollen, Chris [MD-8] (introduced 2/25/2009) Cosponsors (169)

H.R.1211 : **Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act** to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand and improve health care services available to women veterans, especially those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. Companion Bill S.597

Sponsor: Rep Herseht Sandlin, Stephanie [SD] (introduced 2/26/2009) Cosponsors (50)

H.R.1308 : **To direct the Secretary of Defense to adopt a program of professional and confidential screenings** to detect mental health injuries acquired during deployment in support of a contingency operation and ultimately to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

Sponsor: Rep McMahan, Michael E. [NY-13] (introduced 3/4/2009) Cosponsors (42)

H.R.2051 : **To S.423 : Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize advance appropriations for certain medical care accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing two-fiscal year budget authority, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Akaka, Daniel K. [HI] (introduced 2/12/2009) Cosponsors (49)

or: Rep Miller, Jeff [FL-1] (introduced 4/22/2009) Cosponsors (1)

H.R.2254 : **The Agent Orange Equity Act** to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam.

Sponsor: Rep Filner, Bob [CA-51] (introduced 5/5/2009) Cosponsors (29)

H.R.2990 : **To provide special pays and allowances** to certain members of the Armed Forces, expand concurrent receipt of military retirement and VA disability benefits to disabled military retirees, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Skelton, Ike [MO-4] (introduced 6/23/2009) Cosponsors (25)

S.423 : **Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize advance appropriations for certain medical care accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing two-fiscal year budget authority, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Akaka, Daniel K. [HI] (introduced 2/12/2009) Cosponsors (49)

S.491 : **Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act.** A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums. Companion Bill H.R.1203.

Sponsor: Sen Webb, Jim [VA] (introduced 2/26/2009) Cosponsors (36)

S.535 : **SBP DIC Offset Elimination.** A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes. Companion Bill H.775.

Sponsor: Sen Nelson, Bill [FL] (introduced 3/5/2009) Cosponsors (47)

S.546 : **Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2009.** A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service of Combat-Related Special Compensation. Companion Bill H.R.811.

Sponsor: Sen Reid, Harry [NV] (introduced 3/9/2009) Cosponsors (38)

S.731 : **TRICARE Coverage For "Gray Area" Reservists.** A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for continuity of TRICARE Standard coverage for certain members of the Retired Reserve. Companion Bill H.R.270

Sponsor: Sen Nelson, E. Benjamin [NE] (introduced 3/26/2009) Cosponsors (20)

S.801 : **Family Caregiver Program Act of 2009.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive charges for humanitarian care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to family members accompanying veterans severely injured after September 11, 2001, as they receive medical care from the Department and to provide assistance to family caregivers, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Akaka, Daniel K. [HI] (introduced 4/2/2009) Cosponsors (9)

DISCLAIMER: The Retiree Activities Office Newsletter is published by the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) to inform retirees and family members of matters affecting their military rights, benefits, and obligations. While every effort is made to verify information in this newsletter, the RAO staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of information received from outside sources.

SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE CHECK LIST

This checklist is appropriate to survivors of military retirees from ALL branches of the military service. Your survivors must be prepared to furnish the following information and documents when reporting your death. Should you have any questions please contact your Retiree Activities Office. At MacDill AFB this office is located between the Commissary and Base Exchange, Telephone Number (813) 828-4555. For those not residing close to a military station see reverse.

By completing this checklist you will save your bereaved loved ones the hardship of locating this information at the time of your death. Remember – Benefits are not paid to survivors automatically—survivors must report the death of the retiree to the proper military authority as quickly as possible.

Member’s Full Name:

Member’s Social Security Nr.: _____ SBP: Yes _____ No _____

Member’s Service Number: _____ Rank: _____

Date of Retirement: _____ Branch or Service: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____ Place of Death: _____

Cause of Death:

Number of Times Previously Married:(Provide Marriage Certificates, Death certificates and/or Divorce Decrees for each occurrence)

WIDOW(ER)’S INFORMATION

Full Maiden Name:

Social Security Nr.:

Address:

Phone Nr.:

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Date & Place of Marriage:

Number of Times Previously Married: (Provide Marriage Certificates, Death certificates and/or Divorce Decrees for each occurrence)

OTHER SURVIVORS

Children: (Unmarried children under age 21, under age 23 if a full time student, or 21 and over but incapable of self-support) Name, Social Security Numbers, DOB, Address:

Deceased Members Parents (Name & Address): (If Deceased – So State)

Name and Address of Person Making Funeral Arrangements:

Phone Nr:

THINGS TO KNOW AND/OR PLAN FOR UPON DEATH OF A RETIREE

NOTIFICATION: (See “Survivors Check List” for local and military service contacts) (Benefits may be available for survivors.)

- *Social Security Administration 1-800-772-1213
- *Veterans Administration 1-800-827-1000
- *DOD Finance Center 1-800-321-1080
- *Other agencies/companies from which retiree was drawing benefits or had life insurance

PRIOR TO DEATH

- Originate or update a Last Will and Testament, Living Will, and Power of Attorney.
- Retiree’s desired disposition instructions of his body (burial, cremation, memorial service, etc)
- Information required for Death Certificate (Date/Place of birth, Father’s Name, Mother’s Maiden Name, Next of Kin, etc.)
- Information required for obituary notice (names, relation and locations of appropriate relatives, etc.)
- Contents and location of safety deposit boxes and individuals authorized access to the box should be in writing. (Also include the box number and location of the key.) (Court Order may be required if arrangements for survivors access are not made with the facility.)
- Beneficiaries named in insurance policies, in writing, may become important (keep current)
- Location of all documents listed on the “Survivor’s Check List.”

UPON DEATH

- Determine Entitlements to burial benefits (monetary, grave marking, etc). (Check with Social Security and VA)(Funeral Home may determine burial benefits available)
- Request VA secure a Presidential Memorial Certificate in the decease's name.
- An American flag may be obtained for funeral ceremony (Check with VA or Post Office) (The funeral home will normally secure this.)
- Contact VA to advise of Retiree’s Death and determine if survivors benefits are warranted (Dependency Indemnity Compensation, Insurance proceeds, Educational Benefits.)
- Contact Social Security to advise of Retirees Death and determine the survivor’s benefits available.
- Contact DOD Finance Center to advise of Retiree’s Death and determine if SBP annuities or other survivor benefits are available.
- Contact other private and governmental agencies, which retiree was associated, to determine if annuities, insurance or other benefits are available
- Contact insurance companies from which retiree carried policies to determine if lump sum or annuities are available.
- The survivor should update appropriate wills, trusts, etc.
- Living wills (medical) and powers of attorney should be updated (if appropriate)
- Extra credit cards should be destroyed or cancelled.
- Appropriate changes should be made to all joint ownerships (House, Automobiles, Securities, Stocks, Bonds, etc.)
- Widow(er) will need a new ID Card (Turn in deceased retiree's ID Card and revise widow(er)’s ID Card to reflect widow(er))
- Make necessary changes in the DEERS program. (Change TRICARE status, address, etc.) (This will normally be accomplished when securing a new ID Card)
- TRICARE Retiree Dental benefits may be available; call customer services at (888) 838-8737.
- It may take several months to clear estates (you may require up to 8 copies of death certificates, plus long copies [includes reason for death] of the death certificate for each Insurance Policy)

NOTE: *As appropriate.

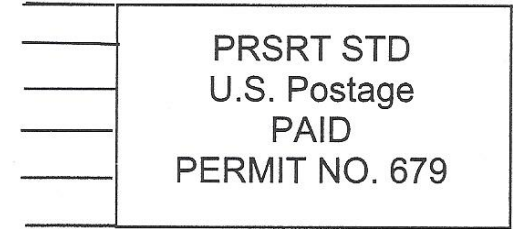
Casualty toll-free number makes assistance easy

The Air Force Personnel Center Casualty Branch, recognizing that the death of a loved one is a stressful time, offers a toll-free number to ensure reporting the death doesn’t add more stress to the situation.

By calling 1(877)353-6807, the caller only has to enter a ZIP code to be connected to the nearest Air Force Casualty Assistance Office. Families residing near an Air Force base may still notify the nearest Military Personnel Flight (MPF).

Families residing at overseas locations may report the death through any military installation, U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The agency should assist families in forwarding casualty information to the AFPC Casualty Services Branch. They may also call (210)565-3505

Retiree Activities Office
6th Air Mobility Wing/CVR
2912 N. Boundary Blvd.
MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5315



RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE STAFF

The RAO is grateful for the efforts of our volunteer staff who unselfishly dedicate their spare time to ensure our retirees, their family, and their survivors are aware of, understand, and receive the entitlements earned as a result of the retirees' long and valiant service to their country.

Juanita Anspach	Counselor
Flo Barr	Counselor
Richard Barrett	Counselor, Tax Preparer
James Blocker	Senior Counselor
Charlie Cheshire	Deputy for Training, Senior Counselor
Letha Edwards	Senior Counselor
Marie Fahringer	Counselor
William Graham	Director, Senior Counselor
Delores Kleva	Senior Counselor
Lloyd Lindemuth	Deputy for Administration, Senior Counselor
Steven Moore	Deputy Director, Deputy for Programs, Tax Preparer
Joseph Moronese	Senior Counselor, Tax Preparer
Marlin Schmidt	Counselor
Maurice Stickney	Deputy for Facilities, Senior Counselor
Frank Washburn	Counselor, Tax Preparer
Lindsey Wilson	Senior Counselor

"Serving those who served"