

Department of the Air Force

Lackland AFB Retiree Activities Office  
Newsletter January 2010

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**COMMANDER'S CORNER**

**William H. Mott, Col, USAF**

**Commander, 37 Training Wing**

**Joint Base San Antonio is Here:**

After many years of discussion following the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) reorganization plan, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) is finally becoming a reality. Marked by formal ceremonies held 2 Feb 2010, both the 37 Training Wing here at Lackland and the 12 Flying Training Wing at Randolph became part of the transition to JBSA. Fort Sam Houston will follow in April. What does this mean to the average retiree doing their normal business on Lackland, not much in a day to day sense. All of the services you use will still be available and the switch is mostly name changes to the outside person. Behind the scenes however there are a great deal of changes taking place. The single most significant change at Lackland is the 37 TRW is no longer the installation support Wing for the base. That function is now performed by the 502 Air Base Wing, headquartered at Fort Sam Houston. The 12 FTW and the 37 TRW will continue their training missions, but will no longer provide installation support. The new ABW is responsible for all installation support programs in San Antonio. For example, if you come to Lackland for a function at the Gateway Club and later that day decided to drive to Fort Sam Houston's BX to go shopping and then on your way home stop at Pass and ID at Randolph to register a vehicle you have just been served by the same Air Base Wing Commander! Brig Gen Len Patrick leads the 502 ABW. He will have control over a vast network of Base Operating Support services at all three installations. So, as you go about your

normal visits to the various installations in San Antonio and you begin to see new signs with the words Joint Base San Antonio, you will know basically what that is referring to. While some signs may change, the same outstanding support by the same professional staff will be waiting to provide you the same world class services you have come to rely on in San Antonio.

**RAO DIRECTOR REMARKS**

**Robert C. Zaske**

**37<sup>th</sup> Training Wing RAO MSS/TRW**

Another year has gone by and looking back at the year of 2009 my staff and my self can say that we had a very successful year. We have helped either by phone or that you came to our office for help and information. We helped close to three thousand this past year in the following areas, Tricare, retired pay questions, casualty assistance, VA questions, ID Cards questions, AARP signups and assistance, and other misc help. This is the primary reason we have this office, to help our retired community. Much of the time we are able to refer the caller to the right agency or connect him or her to an on line link that will solve their problem. It's very rewarding to know that we was able to help a retired persons. It's also very enjoyable to visit with fellow retirees who are all working for a common cause.

We are still in need of volunteers! Please contact us if you have 3-4 hours a week that you could donate. Please call us at 210 -671-2728 or come into our office that is located in bldg 5616 room 129.

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and have a great and Happy New Year.

### EYE EXAMINATIONS:

Did you know that you can get your eyes examined at Wilford Hall? All eligible beneficiaries, regardless of Medicare status, can get comprehensive ocular health exams and any needed eye surgeries in the Ophthalmology Department at WHMC on Lackland AFB. To schedule a appointment please call 210-292-4415.

COLA 2010 Update 06: The Bureau of Labor Statistics just announced the monthly consumer price index for July. The CPI is the measure used to make adjustments to military retired pay, survivor benefits, Social Security and other federal pensions. The CPI-W for July is 210.526 which is down 0.2% from the June figure of 210.972. The CPI-W July value of 210.526 is now down 2.3% from the 2008 COLA Base of 215.5.

The July value will be averaged with the August and September values to determine the 2010 COLA. For retirees and survivors to see any COLA for 2010 inflation would have to rise more than 2.4% each month for August and September. That's just not going to happen, barring some kind of disaster that nobody wants to see. As a reminder the law doesn't allow a negative COLA. If inflation is negative for the year, as seems almost certain, there just won't be a COLA.

[Source: MOAA Leg Up 21 Aug 09]

### Air Force now has a new Web site for retirees

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas (AFRNS) – The Air Force has a new Web site just for its retiree community that is full of news and information, plus it is easy to access and

navigate. The Air Force Retiree Services site is located at [www.retirees.af.mil](http://www.retirees.af.mil). This public Web site offers 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. Visitors can access the sections by using the top navigation bar on the home page. The home page also features the latest Air Force headline news and video clips. There is even a special icon for quick access to the Combat-Related Special Compensation information page and navigate.

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

### Good News for Air Force Retirees

After having suspended publication in hard copy for three years, the Air Force Retiree newsletter "The Afterburner" has made a return for its September 2009 edition. However, the Co-Chairman of the Air Force Retiree Council, LtGen. Steven R. Polk, says that efforts are still needed to do everything possible to hold down costs.

In order to help with cost savings all on-line subscribers to the *e-Afterburner* are asked to give up receiving the hard copy versions by allowing their names to be removed from the postal mailing list.

To be removed from the hard-copy mailing list, people who receive the *e-Afterburner* should email their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the last four digits of their Social Security number to [afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil).

### SSAN Removal

DoD announced this week, in response to an increasing awareness of the growing need to protect the safety of Service members and their families identity information, it plans to

remove Social Security Account Numbers (SSAN) from all military identification cards by the end of 2010. Instead, the cards will display only the last four digits of the SSAN.

Changes to cards will be made upon ID card renewal. Phase One: Remove Dependent SSANs: To begin by end of calendar year 2008.

Phase Two: Remove all printed SSANs: To begin by end of calendar year 2009.

Phase Three: Remove SSANs embedded in barcodes: calendar year 2012

### Air Force Retiree Activities Offices Worldwide Need Volunteers

(Courtesy of Air Force News Service)

Retiree activities office members currently need volunteers at more than 100 offices at active-duty, Reserve and Guard bases worldwide.

Volunteer opportunities for retired military and their family members occur in several areas, depending on the base. Most bases have openings in areas like the hospital, clinic and pharmacy administration sections; thrift shops; legal offices; family support centers and the retiree activities office itself.

Retiree activities office volunteers assist retirees with several actions including: serving as an information center for space-available travel, TRICARE and base services; offering referrals for financial assistance and pay matters; counseling active-duty Airmen nearing retirement; and providing literature on retirement issues.

"We've all benefited from our time on active duty, and we've benefited from the training and education that were provided. During that phase of life where you do have some time to give back volunteering, it can be very rewarding to do that," said retired Lt. Gen. Steven R. Polk, co-chairman of the Air Force Retiree Council. "This is the Year of the Air Force

Family and that family includes not only our active duty ... so the motto of the retirees is 'still serving,' so where a base needs help, it's important for volunteers to provide that help."

For more Air Force retiree activities office information and locations near you, visit this [website](#). NAUS Note: Retired activity offices for ALL services could use more volunteers. Check with your local base to see what you can do to help.

### Veteran MOH Retiree Wins Another Fight

NAUS followed closely the ongoing battle of Medal of Honor (MOH) recipient retired Army Col. Van T. Barfoot, against the homeowners association in his neighborhood in Richmond, VA, hoping that common sense might prevail.

On Wednesday, the homeowners association dropped a threat of legal action and Col Barfoot was "allowed to keep" the 21-foot flagpole in his front yard.

Prior to Wednesday's decision, the association had threatened to take Barfoot to court if he failed to remove the pole from his suburban Richmond home by Friday. It had said the pole violated the neighborhood's aesthetic guidelines.

Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Jim Webb had rallied behind Barfoot, a World War II, Korean and Vietnam veteran. In a letter last week, Sen. Webb urged the association to "consider the exceptional nature of Col. Barfoot's service when considering his pride and determination in honoring our flag."

Additionally, this week Rep. "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee, introduced a NAUS-endorsed bill to allow any Medal of Honor winner to properly display a flag at their home in any way they might choose.

Col. Barfoot was awarded the Medal of Honor for actions while his platoon was under German assault near Carano, Italy, in May 1944. He was credited with standing up to

three German tanks with a bazooka and stopping their advance.

He also won the Purple Heart and other decorations, and served in Korea and Vietnam before retiring from the service in 1974.

**NAUS Note:** It is a sad commentary indeed when this type of action has to be taken to allow an American hero to legally and properly display his flag. Well Done, Col. Barfoot!

**2009 Tax Form, Pay Statement Availability Schedule**

Military retirees with a myPay online account can now download their annual account statements. Annuitant statements will be available online December 14.

**Valued myPay Customer**

DFAS has implemented new myPay access requirements to increase the security of user information. This change requires that you establish a new user name (login ID) and password.

Customized login IDs and passwords will allow you more flexibility and opportunities to increase the security of your personal information.

When logging into myPay the first time following implementation of the new security enhancements, you will be allowed to use your existing login ID and PIN and will be prompted to change your login credentials.

New login IDs will require six to 129 alphanumeric characters that will be unique to one user only. If you attempt to create a login ID that has already been established you will be prompted to create a different login ID.

Login IDs must meet the following requirements:

- \* No less than six and no more than 129 characters.
- \* Cannot be nine numbers only (prohibits use of a SSN as a login ID).
- \* May contain alphabetic (letters) and/or numeric characters and may also contain the following special characters: @ (at sign), \_ (underscore), - (dash), . (period), ` (apostrophe)

You will be required to establish a password to accompany your customized login ID. Passwords must be no less than eight and no more than 15 characters.

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

- \* No less than eight and no more than 15 characters.
- \* May not include the last four numbers of the user's Social Security number.
- \* May not match the user's login ID.
- \* May not match any of the user's previous 10 passwords for myPay access.
- \* Must contain at least one letter and one number.
- \* Must contain at least one of 10 special characters.

If you have established a Restricted Access PIN, you will also be prompted to establish a limited access login ID and password using the same requirements.

Use of the myPay interactive voice response system, which allows telephone access to certain pay information, may still be entered using the Social Security number and myPay PIN.

**While this security enhancement is intended to help keep your information secure and prevent unauthorized access to pay accounts, DFAS encourages you to take appropriate actions to keep your login IDs and passwords private. This can include storing them in a lockable and secure place, memorizing them and destroying any written record, and not sharing them with anyone.**

**Questions regarding this myPay change may be directed to the Centralized Customer Support Unit toll free at 1-888-DFAS411 or 1-888-332-7411, commercial (216) 522-5096, Defense Switching Network (DSN) 580-5096 (7:00 A.M - 6:30 P.M. / Eastern time).**

### **VOLUNTEERISM**

**A new study provides new info and more evidence that participating in volunteer activities may add years to an older person's life.**

**Volunteering, the studies say, have found that in many cases volunteering can improve health outcomes by expanding retirees' their social networks, increasing their access to resources and improving their sense of self-worth.**

**The Retiree Activity Office is in very bad need of at least three more volunteers.**

**Call or visit our office in Bldg 5616, room 129, and fill out the paper work needed.**

**Our office hours are from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Tuesday and Thursday, Wednesday 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Our phone number is (210) 671 2728.**

### **DISCLAIMER:**

The opinions expressed by writers of this newsletter for our web site are their own and should not be construed to be the official position or policy of DoD, USAF, or LAFB. The RAO publishes this newsletter to inform AF retirees and their family members of changes to legislation, defense policies and others matters affecting their military rights, benefits and other obligations. It contains information about LAFB and the local retiree community. While every effort is made to verify information in this newsletter, the RAO "Volunteer" staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of information furnished by outside agencies. We have used info from other bases plus with permission and from

the following areas: Military Com; MOAA, NAUS and others.



