



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

“They Also Serve”

COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST NEWSLETTER

FROM THE CHAIR

President Clinton in 1999 established the Interagency Task Force on the Roles and Missions of the Coast Guard. The goal was to provide advice and recommendations regarding the appropriate role and missions for the CG through 2020. The Task Force has reaffirmed the national importance of the Coast Guard’s legally mandated missions and the continuing responsibility for performing them. The Task Force conclude that the CG provides the United States a broad spectrum of vital services that will be increasingly important in the decades ahead. The Task Force recommended that the nation must take action soon to modernize and recapitalize CG forces, if the Service is to meet the compelling demands of the 21st century.

On Memorial Day I attended dedication of the SM1 Douglas A. Munro burial site as a State Historical Site. One of the high points of the ceremony was the reading of an essay by 13 year old Kevin Willette. His essay is reprinted later. I urge a visit to the site by anyone passing through Cle Elum.

Mark your calendar to attend Retiree Appreciation Day/Open House 2000, scheduled for Friday, 18 August at Fort Lewis. Contact the Fort Lewis Retiree Office if more information is required at (253) 968-9215.

Survey after survey of retired service members continue to affirm that medical care continues to be their number one concern. If you are not already a member of one of the many organizations that represent service members—active as well as retired—I urge you to join. It is an excellent way to keep informed of legislative activities in Congress. Making your Senators and Representatives aware of your position on the various issues before Congress is important. There are several legislative proposals in both the House and Senate that, if passed into law, will have an impact on retired Veterans. Of particular interest is the “Keep Our Promise to American Military Retirees Act” which will restore promised medical care.

Dana Starkweather, Co-Chair

Did you know that Humphrey Bogart, Gower Champion, Jack Dempsey, Buddy Ebsen, and Arnold Palmer are among the celebrities that served in the Coast Guard.

Repeal of Dual Compensation Reductions for Military Retirees

Ref: S.1059, the national defense act for fiscal year 2000, public law 106-65.

OPM interim regulation, federal register vol.65, no. 71

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued interim regulations, effective 12 April 2000, to implement the repeal of two reductions in military retired pay previously required of some retired members of the uniformed services when employed as federal civilian workers. Public law 106-65 repealed the section 5532 of Title 5 retroactively to 1 October 1999.

The repeal affects retired members of an uniformed service

employed in civilian positions or offices in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches (including government corporations, nonappropriated fund instrumentalities under the jurisdiction of the armed forces, and U. S. Postal Service). The two reductions in military retired pay eliminated are:

- The pay cap which limited the combined total of federal civilian basic pay plus military retired pay to \$110,700 (executive level V) for all federal employees who retired from a uniformed service.
- The partial reduction in retired pay required from retired officers of a regular uniformed services component.

Continued on page 2

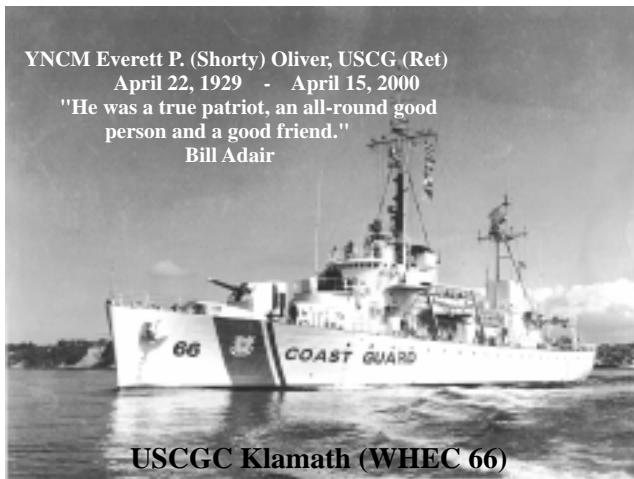
Compensation from page 1

The repeal of 5 USC 5532 does not repeal two other parts of the dual compensation act of 1964, which established limits on service credit and veteran's preference. As a result, unlike other service members, retired members of a uniformed service generally cannot count service time as creditable service for reduction in force (RIF) retention, annual leave accrual, and retirement purposes.

We encourage supervisors with employees who may be affected by this change to pass this information on.

If you have further questions, please contact your servicing civilian command staff advisor (CSA) for further assistance.

Released by Thomas F. Fisher, acting Director of Personnel Management.



1995 Oregon Tax Refunds

Recently, the Oregon Department of Revenue (DOR) denied payment of refunds to 1,170 federal retirees for 1995 on the basis that the DOR, "had to delay refund checks to those who didn't timely file a protective claim." This action by the DOR was immediately challenged by OCFRO attorney Michael G. Hanlon of Ambrose Hanlon LLP who, in his letter to the DOR attorney's, cited specific sections of the November 1998 Stipulated Agreement that applied between the federal retirees (in the class action order approved by Oregon Tax Court Judge Carl N. Byers) and the DOR. Mainly, in Sec. 4b. which states:

"1995-1997 Refunds of Taxes, with interest, shall be paid to all Federal Retirees, without the necessity of filing protective claims." Therefore, payments for 1995 to affected federal retirees would be made "in a couple of weeks" as announced by the DOR on February 10, 2000 on its web site (at www.dor.state.or.us -select "Federal Retirees"). This would then calculate out to mean that the 1,170 checks would have been mailed on/or about February 24, 2000. It is interesting to note that the Oregonian reported that the federal retirees "asked" for the refunds with no reference whatever made to the applicable Stipulated Agreement between the parties! Thankfully, OCFRO attorneys are ever alert to protect our interests.

ELEANOR SEBASTIAN, et al., v. THE UNITED STATES: On February 7, 2000 OCFRO attorneys, on behalf of The Retired Officers Association and 29 other uniformed services and veterans organizations (on a national basis), filed an AMICUS BRIEF (friend of the court) in Sebastian, with the U. S. Supreme Court. At issue are broken promises for the provision of medical care made by the Government as an inducement to serve their country through a career in the uniformed services. OCFRO will follow-up on this issue as announcements are made for those cases the high court will accept for the next term.

REFUND QUESTIONS: Questions can be directed to Don Poitras (DOR) at 503-945-8590 or to Michael G. Hanlon's (Portland) office: at 503-222-0552 - ask for Graziela Eamon.

BIG DEADLINE DATE APPROACHING VERY RAPIDLY: The deadline date for filing of Form 40-F, Oregon Federal Retiree Verification of Claim Form, is April 16, 2001. The same deadline date applies to beneficiaries of federal retirees. But for beneficiaries, in addition to Form 40-F, Form 243-F, Verification of Claim for Refund Due a Deceased Federal Retiree. These forms (with instructions) can be obtained from the Oregon Department of Revenue, 955 Center Street, Salem, Oregon 97310-2501 or by calling toll free (January-April only) at (800) 356-4222. Or, from May through December call (503) 378-4988. Please pass this information along to members at your chapter meetings and in your newsletters. We don't want anyone to fail to take advantage of the federal retiree's victory in Dixon! Vogl v. the State of Oregon. We must point out that we have found the Oregon Department of Revenue officials and staff to be very helpful in this matter.

Coast Guard Acronyms

A recent project compiled a comprehensive list of Coast Guard Acronyms. They compiled the listing from a variety of Coast Guard sources and programs. That list resides on the G-S web site at the address below. It is a valuable resource, particularly for those of us that are acronym challenged.

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-s/g-si/g-sii/Acronym%20Dictionary.htm

RETIREE NEWSLETTER

The RETIREE NEWSLETTER is a publication containing news of general interest, suggestions, and information to keep Coast Guard retirees and their dependents informed of recent developments. This publication shall not be considered authority and is non-record material. Comments and suggestions should be directed to the editor, Patrick Wills, care of:

COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST
USCG Integrated Support Command
Worklife (Retiree Council)
1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1
Seattle, Washington 98134



This is the continuation of a series of questions and answers about TRICARE that will conclude in the next issue of the Retiree Newsletter.

Primary Care Providers

31. *What is a Primary Care Manager (PCM)?* A PCM is a medical professional, or a team of providers, in a military hospital or clinic, or in a civilian network, who will assume primary responsibility for providing, arranging and coordinating an enrollee's total health care. A physician designated as a PCM could be one who practices in General or Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics and OB/GYN. Nurse Practitioners and Physician's Assistants who are privileged to provide primary care services may be organized as part of the PCM team.

32. *How can I get a listing of PCMs and other network providers?* A listing of network providers (Provider Directory) in your area is available at your local TRICARE Service Center.

33. *If I select a civilian network PCM, can I still use an MTF for routine health care services?* No, enrollees choosing a civilian Primary Care Manager must be referred to the military treatment facility for specialty and inpatient care by that Primary Care Manager. An enrollee who has chosen a civilian Primary Care Manager may, however, return for pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and other ancillary care they may require.

34. *If I am already confident that I need to see a specialist, do I need to contact my PCM before I go? What will happen if I don't?* For those enrolled in TRICARE Prime, it is always necessary to first consult your Primary Care Manager for specialty care. If it is necessary for you to see a specialist, your PCM will help make an appointment for you. If you see a specialist on your own, without prior approval from your PCM you will be participating in Prime's Point-of-Service option and will be responsible for 50 percent of the cost after the deductible (\$300 for single enrollment and \$600 for family enrollment) is met.

35. *My PCM refuses to provide a referral for services I believe I need. What do I do?* The TRICARE Prime program has provisions for second opinions. If you feel that the diagnosis or treatment plan may not be correct, you can request that your Primary Care Manager refer you out for a second opinion. Additionally, if you are dissatisfied with your Primary Care Manager (PCM), you can request assignment to another PCM. If you are still not satisfied, you can file a complaint or grievance regarding the non-availability of service decision to the MTF Commander or Regional Lead Agent. Finally, you have the option of using the Point-of-Service option under Prime. A retroactive reimbursement may be an option through a successful appeal process.

Special Benefits

36. *How do we obtain emergency care under TRICARE?*

Any eligible beneficiary should access the nearest emergency room of any military or civilian hospital for true emergencies, regardless of which TRICARE option you use.

37. *Does the copayment increase for the emergency room?* There are no out-of-pocket costs for any care received at a military hospital, including emergency room care. The out-of-pocket costs for care received at a civilian emergency room for families of E-4 and below enrolled in Prime is \$10. For families of E-5 and above and retirees and their families, the copay for an emergency room visit is \$30. This single payment, \$10 or \$30, includes all emergency room services provided in conjunction with the visit. For those who have chosen to remain in TRICARE Standard, or use the TRICARE Extra program, their regular deductibles and copayments apply.

38. *What is a Health Evaluation and Risk Assessment?* It is a self-initiated questionnaire surveying many lifestyles and diet factors which will be reviewed and discussed with you by your primary care provider.

39. *Is mental health and substance abuse recovery covered under TRICARE Prime?* Mental health and substance abuse treatments are covered under TRICARE Prime with a minimal copayment. The cost for outpatient visits will be \$10 for E-4 and below and \$20 for E-5 and above. Retirees will pay \$25 per visit. The copayments are reduced for group visits. For inpatient care the costs are \$20 per day for all active duty family members and \$40 per day for retirees.

40. *What is the function of the Nurse Advisor?* Nurse advisors are available in most regions, by phone, to provide advice and assistance that will enhance patient decision making about their health care. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can discuss treatment alternatives, symptoms, and illness prevention or can advise whether a situation warrants immediate medical attention. Any TRICARE-eligible person can use the service of the nurse advisor.

41. *Does TRICARE Prime cover long-term care?* Prime will cover long-term health care to the extent that CHAMPUS does today, that is, noncustodial, skilled care. Please discuss specific care requirements with your local Health Benefits Advisor.

42. *Will a pre-existing condition be a factor before being accepted into Prime?* No. Pre-existing conditions will not disqualify you from enrolling in Prime.

TRICARE EXTRA & TRICARE STANDARD

43. *Is preventive care covered under Standard or Extra?* Preventive care is an added benefit under Prime. If the particular preventive service is a benefit included under the TRICARE Standard (CHAMPUS) benefits, you will be responsible for the deductible and copayment under Extra and Standard. See your Health Benefits Representative about specific preventive care under TRICARE Standard.

44. *How do I switch from TRICARE Standard to Extra and vice-versa? Can I do this at any time?* As long as you are not enrolled in TRICARE Prime, you may switch between Standard and Extra at any time. You can switch by making the choice between any civilian doctor and a doctor within the Extra network.

45. *If I am participating in TRICARE Standard, do I have to*

TriCare from page 3

pay for medical care at a MTF? There aren't any out-of-pocket costs for outpatient care received at an MTF. However, it is important to remember that TRICARE Prime enrollees will receive priority for care at that MTF before non-enrolled beneficiaries. You will be seen on a space-available-basis only.

46. *I am participating in TRICARE Standard. Do I need to pay for my medical expenses up front, or will the doctor bill TRICARE directly?* Under TRICARE Standard, depending upon your provider, you may be required to pay for your share of the medical treatment up front. If you go to a doctor who participates in the Extra network, your out-of-pocket costs will be less than with Standard and you will not have to file claims.

PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

47. *I have an eligible family member with special needs. How does TRICARE fit in with the Program for Persons with Disabilities (PFPWD), previously known as the Program for the Handicapped?* The PFPWD is a financial assistance program for active duty dependents with severe physical disabilities or with moderate to severe mental retardation who cannot get specialized training or care through public resources. Active duty family members can take advantage of both TRICARE and the PFPWD programs concurrently. The exception is that authorized services provided in conjunction with the PFPWD qualifying condition cannot be furnished under the basic program as long as the qualifying condition exists and there is a PFPWD benefit authorization outstanding. The PFPWD is used concurrently with TRICARE Prime, Extra or Standard. Authorization for benefits under PFPWD does not affect your enrollment in TRICARE Prime. It does provide an additional financial option to explore when utilizing medical resources. When you are enrolled in TRICARE Prime, you are assigned a Primary Care Manager, who has the responsibility to authorize specialty care under the Prime program. Benefits not normally covered may be cost shared under the PFPWD. Because of the cost associated with care for family members with special needs, most families will be encouraged to review all of the TRICARE options. Recognizing that the catastrophic cap under Extra and Standard is only \$1,000, and all further cost are covered at 100% by the government, TRICARE Prime may not be your best option. Further, most State and Federal Agencies cover some of these specialty services at little or no additional cost. Check with your regional TRICARE Service Center to see which TRICARE option is the best for your particular family member. For personnel who are Medicare eligible due to a disability and are under the age of 65, they still retain their TRICARE eligibility (see questions 55 and 56 for more information).

NATIONAL MAIL ORDER PHARMACY

48. *What is the National Mail Order Pharmacy Program (NMOP)?* The NMOP is DoD's new timesaving and inexpensive mail order service for maintenance prescriptions. Beneficiaries can receive free delivery to a home, temporary stateside address, or APO/FPO addresses.

49. *Who is eligible for the NMOP?* At this time:

- + Active duty worldwide
- + CHAMPUS beneficiaries living in Alaska and Puerto Rico

- + All beneficiaries in the TRICARE Prime, Extra and Standard program except those in Regions 1, 2 and 5.
- + Uniformed services treatment facility enrollees
- + Overseas CHAMPUS beneficiaries with APO or FPO addresses
- + Base realignment and closure Medicare eligibles in TRICARE Regions 1, 2, and 5.
- + Base realignment and closure Medicare eligibles at: Naval Air Station, Adak, AK; Naval Air Station, Alameda, CA; Naval Air Station, Treasure Island, CA; Sierra Army Depot, CA and Ft. Chaffee, AR

50. *I currently have access to a mail order program under TRICARE Prime. Is the NMOP the same program?* No. It is an entirely different program that is not only region-wide, but also worldwide, under one contract with Merck-Medco Rx Services. Regarding current enrollees, the NMOP is only available to those enrolled in TRICARE Prime at an MTF. So, if you are enrolled at a MTF, and not through a Prime network, you are eligible to use the NMOP. Effective April 1, 1998 the NMOP will be available to all beneficiaries now covered by Managed Care Support contractors (both enrolled and non-enrolled beneficiaries). These beneficiaries will be phased in upon completion of negotiations with the MCS contractor currently responsible for their regional mail order benefit.

51. *What medications are available through the NMOP?* The NMOP is for prescriptions that you take on a regular basis, such as medication to reduce blood pressure or treat asthma, diabetes, or any long-term health condition. It is not intended to be used for acute medications like antibiotics.

52. *What if I have other health insurance with a prescription benefit?* Any beneficiary who is in one of the eligible groups for the NMOP, but has other health insurance with a pharmacy benefit will be required to use the other available pharmacy benefit coverage first.

53. *How can I get more information about the NMOP?* If you are in one of the eligible beneficiary groups, see your local military treatment facility pharmacy for details, or call the Merck-Medco Member Services line at 1-800-903-4680. Outside the U.S., contact your long distance carrier for access. The TDD number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-759-1089. Both a short Program Registration Form and a Confidential Patient Profile Registration Form will need to be completed.

MEDICARE

54. *I am disabled, under age 65. Can I enroll in TRICARE Prime?* Yes. Beneficiaries eligible for Medicare on the basis of disability or end stage renal disease that are:

- (1) under age 65, and
- (2) enrolled in Medicare Part B, are eligible to enroll in Prime and have the enrollment fee waived. However, when these beneficiaries reach age 65, they must receive their health care through Medicare.

To be Continued...

The July 8 Retiree Council meeting will be at Cape Disappointment, Ilwaco, Washington. We will conduct our meeting from 1030 to 1215 and have a lunch at 1230. There will be a short briefing about Cape "D" by the CO or Group Commander too.



MCPO David R. Ojeda, Jr., USCG, addresses crowd gathered for the Memorial Service and Declaration of Douglas A. Munro Historical Site on May 29, 2000 in Cle Elum, Washington.

Honor and Respect Come From Your Heart

By Kevin Willette of Walter Strom Middle School
Cle Elum/Roslyn School District at memorial with MCPO Ojeda

At my age of 13, I think a person could really honor the veterans by respecting them and helping them whenever they need it because they saved your family and your country. If you respect a veteran it would be a very good start to help repay your gratitude. When the veterans saw friends, family, or their squad member's die it must have broke their hearts. But when you respect and help them out, they have a very big chunk put back in their hearts. If I were a veteran I'd love for people to treat me nice, instead of them thinking of me as just a person that was in the war. Putting up the memorial wall is one way that people can remember who those men and women were and why they died. To go and touch the wall must be an awesome feeling, to be able to silently thank those people for laying down their lives so I can have a better chance to survive today.

There is so much a person can do to honor the vets. First off, always be polite and courteous, never stare at a disabled person, we don't know if he or she became that way fighting for



our freedom. I think its ok to ask questions, but if someone doesn't want to talk about it you shouldn't be offended, it's probably because its hard to talk about. We will never know all they saw, did, or heard while overseas. I've watched war movies and felt really bad for all the men and women, although its just a movie, I can't imagine facing death day after day. My mom says we should always assume older people served one way or another in the service. While talking to my mom about this essay, she said, honor and respect comes from your heart. We talked a lot about the different people and their jobs, when it came to the wars. Not only should we honor our fighting vets, but also the men and women that stayed home and made uniforms, bullets, and missiles. The nurses, doctors, and the families with loved ones over seas. They too are heroes and should be thanked and respected. I feel the best way to honor our vets, is to talk about what they did for our country. Not just on Veterans Day or Memorial Day, but every day. Keep their memories alive. Whether we knew a vet or just heard about them it's very important to remember them all for what they gave us. Our freedom!

“Chicken Soup for the Veteran’s Soul”

The co-author of the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” book series is looking for stories to be compiled in a “Chicken Soup for the Veteran’s Soul”. The submittal should be less than 1200 words, understandable to other than the military population and reflect a “moment” or actual event in someone’s life (combat, heroism, laughter, sense of duty, leadership, reunion, patriotism, etc.) Portions of the book profits will go to associations that benefit veterans. Deadline is August 1, 2000. The release date is expected August 2001.

Send your story to:
Chicken Soup for the Veteran’s Soul,
607 W. Broadway,
Fairfield, IA 52556. Fax: (515) 472-0719.

Korean War Commemorative Web Site

The Secretary of Defense, has established the Korean War Commemorative web site. This is the official, public access web site for the Department of Defense commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War and is the starting point for all public information regarding events during the commemorative period which runs from June 25, 2000 through July 27, 2003. The site is located at: <http://korea50.army.mil>

Its Purpose:

- Identify, thank and honor the veterans of the Korean War, their families, especially those who lost loved ones.
- Recognize and remember the Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA).
- Recognize the contributions of women and minorities to their Nation during the Korean War.

- Provide the American public with a clearer understanding and appreciation of the lessons, history, and legacy of the Korean War.
- Inform future generations of the United States military's contributions to the Nation in maintaining world peace and freedom through preparedness and engagement.
- Recognition of United Nations forces engaged in preserving the peace, freedom and prosperity of the Republic of Korea.

Ensure commemorative events strengthen and unify the bonds of friendship and relationships throughout the world focusing on the 22 countries that fought as Allies and the adversaries.

CG Retiree Council Northwest Reopens Office in New Location

The Coast Guard Retiree Council – Northwest reopened the Retired Affairs Office, ISC, Seattle, WA on May 24th, 2000. The office is located in Building 1, Integrated Support Command, Seattle, Rm. 151. The current hours of operation are 0900 to 1400, Wednesdays only. The telephone number is (206) 217 6188, if no one answers your call, please leave a message so a return call can be made. The email address for the office is Evblack@pacnorwest.uscg.mil. (Since staffing is only one (1) day per week please email any member of the Council with your questions). Email to the office will not be answered until the following Wednesday.



USCGC Storis on patrol off Alaska

REUNIONS

USCG Lightship Sailors Reunion 2000

October 6-7-8
 Baltimore, MD
 Contact: Marty Kryzwicki
 94 Albemarle St
 St Paul, MN 55117
 (651) 488-6166
 E-mail is: marty.k@juno.com

2nd All Icebreaker Sailor Reunion

August 24-26, 2000
 at the Holiday Inn Marine World, Vallejo, CA.
 Contact Bruce Brady at (800) 919-8036, pin 97.
 40 Fourth Street, #238,
 Petaluma, CA 94952
 E-mail is: wagb4@home.com.

New Book Worth Noting

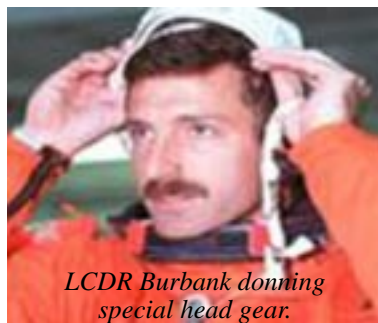
Publisher - Brassey's Inc., PO Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172
 - Tel. 1-800-775-2518 - *Lifeboat Sailors - Disasters, Rescues, and the Perilous Future of the Coast Guard's Small Boat Stations* - Dennis L. Noble - Price \$27.95 plus shipping.

Coast Guard Astronaut

Our second Coast Guard astronaut, LCDR Daniel C. Burbank, Mission Specialist 3, is scheduled to blast off from Kennedy Space Center on September 8, 2000 aboard Shuttle ATLANTIS. His flight, STS-106, will



be the fourth International Space Station (ISS) construction flight. The objectives of this flight are to outfit the living quarters (or Service Module) in preparation for the arrival of the first permanent ISS crew.



LCDR Burbank donning special head gear.

Parts of the life support and electrical systems will be installed, a cargo freighter will be unloaded, and a spacewalk will be performed to mate electrical connectors and sensors to the outside space station.

Please join us in wishing our space age Pterodactyl a safe and rewarding journey. Information on his flight can be obtained at the following web site <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/archives/sts-106/index.html>

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Americanism Essay Contest

FRA's National Committee on Americanism and Patriotism is sponsoring its annual Americanism Essay Contest for students in grades 7 through 12 (or equivalent). The theme for the 2000-2001 contest is "What Does the American Flag

Stand For?" Entrants must be sponsored by a FRA branch, LA FRA unit, or member. Essays of 350 words or less must be typed or legibly written on a single sheet of paper and must be submitted to a branch Americanism chairman by 1 December 2000. Prizes totaling \$25,000 will be awarded to national winners, with branches and regions offering additional prizes for local and area winners. Contact your local FRA branch for more information.

For Widows over Age 65.

On 7 Apr, the President signed into law the "Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000. It eliminates the retirement earnings test in and after the month in which a person attains full retirement age - currently 65. This impacts SBP for working annuitants over age 65.

The Law BEFORE...

- The previous "Retirement Earnings Test" affected people under age 70 whose earned income exceeded the annual allowable dollar amount (i.e., \$17,000 in 2000). Social Security (SS) entitlement was reduced for those aged 65-70 by a \$1 for \$3 offset; and for those under 65 by a \$1 for \$2 offset - when the earnings limit was exceeded.
- When an SBP annuitant exceeded the earnings limit and was entitled to a post-62 annuity calculation under the Social Security Offset (SSO) method, the SBP annuity amount took into account the lost SS entitlement and adjusted accordingly.

The Law NOW...

- A working annuitant can earn any amount after age 65 with no loss of SS entitlement. Thus, the SBP second tier reduction (if applicable) cannot be delayed beyond age 65 regardless of working status! Remember, it's not SS receipt, it's entitlement.
- This law change is retroactive to 1 Jan 00. This causes SBP monies to have been overpaid (technically) since SS entitlement did exist, in theory and law (even though not yet paid by SSA) for those over 65.
- Social Security will restore their benefit retroactively; but it may take them as long as six months to do so.

News to Us...

- DFAS-DE is sending out a "We regret to inform you..." debt letter to affected annuitants. It announces the overpayment of the SBP annuity, and the need to make arrangements within 45 days to repay the debt.
- The letter we saw did not mention a reason for the debt; simply that it exists for the period 1 Jan - 31 Mar; nor does the letter suggest that the annuitant visit/call SSA.

Now that we've seen the form letter, we can advise you to do two things:

- a) direct affected annuitants to contact SSA immediately to arrange for retroactive SS payments; and,
- b) assist them in contacting DFAS-DE regarding debt repayment. In a perfect world, two government agencies would set their collection/disbursal times concurrently.

Additional sources of information on this law change are at: <http://www.ssa.gov> and in the Army Times, 24 Apr 2000, p. 20.

Retiree Council member elected to NAUS Board of Directors

Tony R. Espejo, CWO3, USCG (Ret.), a member of the 13th Coast Guard District Retiree Council, was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS).

What is NAUS? The National Association for Uniformed Services is a national association of individual members whose main mission is legislative representation. It is the only military-affiliated association with a political Action Committee (PAC) registered on Capitol Hill to fight for our interests.

It is so important that we, as individual members of organizations and coalitions, work together in each congressional district to insure that our interests are represented and understood. The "explaining" part is the more difficult and here is why. Years ago, 82% of the members of Congress were military veterans and had served 2 years or more of active duty while 80% of Congressional Staffers had 2 or more years of active duty. One fourth of them had served in combat. They readily understood.

Today, less than one third of the members of Congress have had military experience and only about 1 out of 10 congressional staffers. And this is the other challenge because congressional staff exerts a powerful influence on the legislative process. They often decide who the congressperson sees, what they read, explain and recommend bills and grease the legislative machinery along. If they do not understand, for example, the issue of the need to keep promises made to our military it is because they don't remember the promises and because they were not there when the promises were made. So we need to do a better job of explaining military issues.

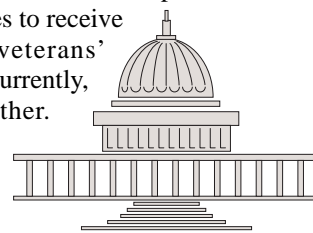
While there are lobbyists working for our interests in Washington, D.C., really, the ultimate lobbyists are we, the voter's back home. So keep up the good work.

Noteworthy matters in Congress

Concurrent Receipt Addressed

S. 2357 — The Armed Forces Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payment Act of 2000 would permit retired members of the Armed Forces to receive military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation concurrently, without deduction from either.

This measure is similar to other concurrent receipt bills in the House (H.R. 303, H.R. 44, H.R. 65, and H.R.1764) and applies to all military retirees who served 20 years or more and are eligible for VA disability benefits.



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210th Anniversary Coast Guard Day Picnic Saturday, July 29th (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Location: Lower Woodland Park (Picnic Areas 1, 2 & 3)

Ticket Prices:

E-2 to E-5; GS2 to GS6	\$2 per person
Auxiliary, SPARS	\$5 max charge per family
E-6 to O-3; GS7 to GS11	\$3 per person
Retirees, Civilians	\$10 max charge per family
O-4 and above	\$4 per person
GS12 and above	\$15 max charge per family



**** Free for volunteers ****

Food, Fun and More:

- Catering will be provided by Longhorn BBQ!
- Adults and Kids Games!
- Paying members will be eligible for Door Prizes!

Directions from I-5: Take NE 50th exit #169, head west, continue past Greenlake Way approx. 3 blocks and picnic entrance will be the first road past the tennis court.



Attn Chefs: There will be a baking contest and chili cook-off. The following baking categories be judged: pies, cakes, cookies. Cold storage is available if needed. Prizes will go to the winners.

From page 7 - Congressional Matters

Long-Term Care Approved by House Panel

The House Government Reform Civil Service Subcommittee approved a measure (H.R. 4040) sponsored by the panel's chairman Rep. Joe Scarborough (R-Fla.) that will provide long-term care for federal civilian and military employees, retirees, and family members including spouses, children, parents, and parents-in-laws. The bill authorizes OPM to administer the program, which provides benefits to care for enrollees when they can not perform daily living activities for themselves. Enrollees would pay 100 percent of the premiums, which vary based on the age of the participant and the type of coverage selected. The bill will now be considered by the full Government Reform Committee. Similar legislation (S. 2218) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.) and has garnered support from Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner (R-Va.).

Military Benefits Act Introduced

Rep. Adam Smith (D- Wash.) introduced The Enhancement of Military Benefits Act (H.R. 4030) last week which provides a 4.8 percent pay raise for all military personnel in 2001, allows military retirees to participate in the Federal Employees Health Care Plan, expands the Medicare Subvention demonstration to a permanent, universal program, and increases the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) benefits from 35 to 55 percent of retired pay.

Combat Action Ribbons for Naval Veterans

Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig has authorized Navy and Marine Corps veterans who served in combat during World War II and the Korean War to receive Combat Action Ribbons (CAR). Veterans who participated in ground or surface combat from 7 December 1941 to 14 April 1946 (WWII) or from 27 June 1950 to 27 July 1954 (Korean War), are eligible for the CAR if they have not already been recognized for that participation. If you served during either of these periods, you may request your CAR by writing directly to the Navy Awards Branch at: Chief of Naval Operations (N09B33), 2000 Navy Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20350-2000.

AMERICAN GI THE PERSON OF THE CENTURY

The House of Representatives passed Concurrent Resolution 282 recognizing the American GI as the Person of the Century. Here is a copy of the Resolution as passed by the House Declaring the 'Person of the Century' for the 20th century to have been the American GI.

106th CONGRESS
2nd Session
H. CON. RES. 282

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas the 20th century was a century of conflict between forces of totalitarianism and dictatorship and forces of democracy and freedom;

Whereas American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines (collectively referred to as 'GI.'s') fought, bled, and died in a number of conflicts during the 20th century, including two World Wars, to secure peace and freedom around the world;

Whereas in large measure due to the heroic efforts of the American GI., more people around the world enjoy the benefits of freedom at the end of the 20th century than at any other time in history;

Whereas the American GI., in fighting the forces of totalitarianism and dictatorship, had a strong personal sense of right and wrong and did not want to live in a world where wrong prevailed;

Whereas it may truly be said that during the 20th century the American GI. accomplished great things while doing good things, becoming recognized throughout the world as a representative of freedom and democracy and, fundamentally, as a force for good in the face of evil;

Whereas at the end of the 20th century numerous organizations and publications sought to identify and designate a 'Person of the Century' based upon achievements and contributions during that century; and

Whereas in light of the accomplishments of the Armed Forces of the United States during that century both in defeating the forces of tyranny and dictatorship and in embodying a sense of honor, decency, and respect for mankind, it is appropriate that the American GI. be recognized as the single most significant force affecting the course of the 20th century:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress hereby declares the 'Person of the Century' for the 20th century to have been the American GI.

Passed the House of Representatives April 10, 2000.

Refunds on SMOG Impact Fees

On October 1, 1999 a California State Appeals Court ruled the \$300 "Smog Impact Fee" unconstitutional thus allowing certain individuals who paid this fee to apply for a refund. The state is refusing to notify individuals that the fee was ruled unconstitutional. The court's decision limited the refund process to that routinely used by California for all refunds which requires an application for refund be submitted within 3 years.



The State's current position is that it will not pay refunds for fees paid more than 3 years ago.

The decision was not final for 30 days, and the State of California had until then to decide whether to appeal the decision to the California Supreme Court. Until the decision is final the \$300 Smog Impact Fee is still due. However, pending any appeal by the State, it is recommended that anyone who paid the California Smog Impact Fee, at any time, immediately submit an application for a refund to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) using form ADM 399/1 (Application for Refund) available at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/forms/forms.htm>. Mail refund applications to:

Department of Motor Vehicles
PO Box 942869 MS A239
Sacramento, CA 94269-0001

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