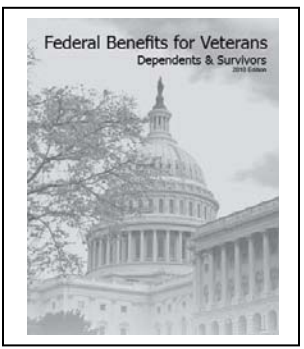


VA Offers Newest Edition of Benefit Handbook

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- The 2010 edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors is available online at www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Produced by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the handbook's chapters cover such topics as VA pensions, home loans, medals and records, special veterans groups, and other federal benefits.

People can view the handbook by individual chapters and sections, or download the entire document, in English or Spanish, in .pdf format. (Courtesy of VA)



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The Prez Sez
The President's Column
 COL John L. Ruppel, Jr. (Ret.)

The Labor Day weekend is the unofficial end of summer and ushers in fall. I trust all have had an enjoyable summer season.

The Association has received a scholarship donation to be awarded in the names of Lt Col Glen Hatley and Major Jim Harshman. There will be a total of six \$1000 2010 scholarships available for award to Wing members. The scholarships will be awarded at the 2011 annual Association March Luncheon.

Jay Craddock and I represented the Association at the Hometown Heroes ceremony held August 7, 2010. The Hometown Heroes ceremony was initiated by the National Guard Bureau to honor Army and Air National Guard members for their service in Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle, and other peace keeping operations around the world.

The Newsletter contains information on the newly launched TriCare Retired Reserve, which will allow certain "gray area" retired National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are not yet age 60, the opportunity to purchase TriCare health coverage.

The Association still has a few members who have not submitted a 2010 dues payment. If you fall into that category your Newsletter will contain a reminder. If the email address we have for you has bounced, you will find a note in your newsletter. Please provide an updated email address. And please remember to advise us whenever you move or change your email address.

School is back in session, so please drive carefully. Watch out for students both young and old!

Cheers!

John

TRICARE Provides Free Vaccinations

TRICARE covers the seasonal and H1N1 flu and age-appropriate doses of vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Beneficiaries can visit participating TRICARE retail network pharmacies to receive seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumonia vaccines at no cost. This expanded coverage is available to all TRICARE beneficiaries eligible to use the TRICARE retail pharmacy benefit. To find a participating pharmacy, visit [TRICARE's Express Scripts webpage](#) or call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303. TRICARE regularly adds coverage for new vaccinations based on CDC recommendations on the [CDC website](#). For more information on immunizations, visit the [Military Health System Immunization Awareness page](#).

Cell Phones for Soldiers

Cell Phones for Soldiers is a non-profit organization that collects old cell phones and exchanges them for calling cards for troops who are overseas. The website explains how to mail donated cell phones to the organization and provides local drop-off points by inputting your zip code. For more information, visit the [Cell Phones for Soldiers website](#).

<http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/>



Tricare Retired Reserve Launches

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFRNS) – For the first time, members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called “gray area” retirees, can purchase Tricare health coverage for themselves and their eligible family members with today’s launch of Tricare Retired Reserve, or TRR.

“This new program offers a health coverage opportunity for “gray area” Guardsmen and Reservists who served America honorably, setting a proud example for today’s forces,” said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the Tricare Management Activity. “Tricare Retired Reserve will provide an outstanding health benefit.”

Retired Reservists may qualify to purchase TRR coverage if they are younger than 60 and are not eligible for, or enrolled in, the Federal Employees Health Benefits program. They must also be members of the Retired Reserve of a Reserve component and qualified for non-regular retirement. For instructions on how to qualify for and purchase TRR go to www.tricare.mil/trr.

For calendar 2010, the TRR member-only monthly premium is \$388.31 (\$4,659.72 yearly), and the member and family monthly premium is \$976.41 (\$11,716.92 yearly). Premiums will be adjusted annually.

The comprehensive health care coverage provided by the premium-based TRR is similar to Tricare Standard. After purchasing TRR, members will receive the Tricare Retired Reserve Handbook, which includes details about covered services, how to get care and who to contact for assistance. For more information, visit www.tricare.mil/trr. (Courtesy of Tricare)

Veterans' Grave Medallion Available for Order

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki announced June 29 that the Department of Veterans Affairs is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a veteran.

"For veterans not buried in a national or state veterans cemetery, or those without a government grave marker, VA is pleased to offer this option that highlights their service and sacrifices for our country," said Secretary Shinseki.

The new item can be furnished instead of a traditional government headstone or marker for veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

Under federal law, eligible veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the new medallion, but not both. Veterans buried in a national or state veterans cemetery will receive a government headstone or marker of the standard design authorized at that cemetery.

The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom.

Next of kin will receive the medallion, along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover.

More information about VA-furnished headstones, markers and medallions can be found at www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmtype.asp.

VA is currently developing an application form for ordering the medallion. Until it is available, applicants may use the form for ordering government headstones and markers, VA Form 40-1330. Instructions on how to apply for a medallion are found on the VA website at www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or grave marker.

The new medallions will be available only to veterans buried in private cemeteries without a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3 million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict -- from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan -- are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the VA website on the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. (Courtesy of VA News)

Regulation Provides Easier Path for Vietnam Veterans

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) – Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation that will be published Aug. 31 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions.

"Last October, based on the requirements of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection for these three additional diseases," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

"It was the right decision, and the president and I are proud to finally provide this group of veterans the care and benefits they have long deserved."

The final regulation follows Secretary Shinseki's determination to expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam veterans is presumed. VA is adding Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease and expanding chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia. In practical terms, veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness do not have to prove an association between their medical problems and their military service.

By helping veterans overcome evidentiary requirements that might otherwise present significant challenges, this "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process and ensure that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve. The secretary's decision to add these presumptives is based on the latest evidence provided in a 2008 independent study by the Institute of Medicine concerning health problems caused by herbicides like Agent Orange.

Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides. More than 150,000 veterans are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months, many of whom are potentially eligible for retroactive disability payments based on past claims. Additionally, VA will review approximately 90,000 previously denied claims by Vietnam veterans for service connection for these conditions. All those awarded service-connection who are not currently eligible for enrollment into the VA healthcare system will become eligible.

This historic regulation is subject to provisions of the Congressional Review Act that require a 60-day Congressional review period before implementation. After the review period, VA can begin paying benefits for new claims and may award benefits retroactively for earlier periods.

For new claims, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the effective date of the regulation or to one year before the date VA receives the application, whichever is later. For pending claims and claims that were previously denied, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the date it received the claim.

VA encourages Vietnam veterans with these three diseases to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation now so the agency can begin development of their claims. Individuals can go to a website at www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm to get an understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivor's benefits.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange. The regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at www.ofr.gov/. (Courtesy of VA)

U.S. Treasury Changes Savings Bond Program

CLEVELAND (AFRNS) -- The Department of the Treasury has changed its policy concerning the issuance of paper savings bonds through payroll savings plans. After September 30, the U.S. Treasury will no longer issue paper savings bonds to federal employees through payroll deduction.

In anticipation of this change, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service discontinued bond allotments July 31.

People can still purchase savings bonds and other Treasury securities through a deduction from their retired pay by creating a TreasuryDirect account. TreasuryDirect is a secure and reliable online system that allows people to purchase Series EE and I savings bonds, Treasury bills, notes, bonds and Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities.

To continue using payroll deduction, people must open a TreasuryDirect account by visiting www.treasurydirect.gov. On the TreasuryDirect home page, click "TreasuryDirect" under the "Open an Account" menu on the right side of the page. After following the instructions, people will get a unique account number they you can use to review the Treasury securities available for purchase.

Once their account is created, a retiree can tell DFAS to establish a TreasuryDirect deduction. They must indicate they want to start a TreasuryDirect allotment, the monthly amount to deduct from retired pay, the month in which the deduction should start the allotment and their Social Security number. An allotment may be set up through myPay online at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>, or via mail. Mail requests to:

DFAS U.S. Retired Military Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130

Retirees may also call the Retired and Annuitant Pay Contact Center at 800-321-1080.

One advantage to the TreasuryDirect deduction over the previous paper savings bond deduction plan is the ability to monitor account activity online.

Paper bonds are still available for purchase through participating financial institutions. Bonds that DFAS is currently holding for safekeeping for customers are already in an electronic format and will not be affected by this change.

The Treasury expects to save \$400 million in taxpayer money and cut the use of 12 million pounds of paper over the first five years the change is in effect. (Courtesy of DFAS)

AAFES Reimbursing Shoppers Locally for Double Charges

DALLAS (AFRNS) -- While the Army and Air Force Exchange Service continues to work around the clock to remedy erroneous credit and debit card charges created as a result of a processing error, shoppers who incurred overdraft fees are being reimbursed at their local facility.

"We promised to do the right thing for our customers that were affected by this unfortunate glitch and we are honoring that promise," said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Helm, AAFES' senior enlisted adviser. "We regret any inconvenience this may have caused and want to reimburse them as quickly as possible."

Shoppers whose credit cards were double charged and, as a result, suffered overdraft fees, can simply bring documentation, such as an overdraft notice or online statement, to their nearest exchange for a full refund of the fees.

The processing error that produced duplicate charges affected AAFES locations worldwide. Depending on the type of card used, corrective action could be visible to the customer anywhere from 24 hours to a couple of weeks. (Courtesy of AAFES)



Specialist Adam Kinser Operation: Care and Comfort Memorial Golf Classic



7th PSYOP Group,
US Army Reserve

To be held

October 8th, 2010

at

The Golf Club at Moffett Field, California

10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start (Scramble Format)

\$80/Individual or \$300/Foursome

Entrance Fee Includes:

- Complimentary gift bag
- Lunch and drink tickets
- 18 Holes w/cart (walkers allowed)
- Raffle Tickets

Prizes for:

- Top Two Teams
- Best Military Team
- Longest Drive (men and women)
- Closest to the Pin

Sign-in begins at 9:00 a.m.

"Mulligans" can be purchased and highly encouraged!!

All proceeds go to Operation: Care and Comfort

www.operationcareandcomfort.org

Registration(via attached Registration Form) confirmed upon receipt of payment via cash, check, and credit card. **Make checks payable to Operation: Care and Comfort** and drop off or mail to: Operation: Care and Comfort, 2392 Walden Square, San Jose, CA 95124. Registration form required with payment.

For more information, Call Mark at 650-336-4061



Sergeant Adam Kinser Operation: Care and Comfort Memorial Golf Classic



7th PSYOP Group,
US Army Reserve

October 8th, 2010
Moffett Federal Airfield Golf Course

Player Registration Form

Player 1: _____ **Player 2:** _____
Company: _____ **Company:** _____
Address: _____ **Address:** _____
Phone: _____ **Phone:** _____
E-Mail: _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Player 3: _____ **Player 4:** _____
Company: _____ **Company:** _____
Address: _____ **Address:** _____
Phone: _____ **Phone:** _____
E-Mail: _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Registration confirmed upon receipt of payment via cash, check, and credit card. **Make checks payable to Operation: Care and Comfort** (www.operationcareandcomfort.org) and drop off or mail to: Operation: Care and Comfort, 2392 Walden Square, San Jose, CA 95124

****Registration Forms and/or Credit Card Payments can be faxed to (408) 754-1495 attn: Alison Hughes**

Company/Organization: _____
Contact Person: _____ **Phone:** (____) _____
E-mail Address: _____ **Fax:** (____) _____

Credit Card Information must be filled out in full

Name on Card: _____
Credit Card Number: _____
Exp date: _____ **Signature:** _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **CA Drivers License #** _____
Type of Credit Card: MC Visa American Exp Discover
Credit Card Total Amount: \$ _____
Tax ID – (American Red Cross) Operation: Care and Comfort #94-1156472

Dondi's Mercantile Store

129th AHA Merchandise & Apparel

If you would like to order a 129th AHA jacket, we again have jackets in stock. Please contact Liliana Ramos for ordering information.

Want to own a really unique & distinctive shirt or cap to show your affiliation with the 129th AHA? Dondi's Mercantile Store has a healthy stock of 129th AHA related items. Jackets and vests are customized with your name and rank.

All merchandise can be ordered by phone or on-line. Items and prices are shown at right. Shipping and handling are EXTRA.

Order from Liliana Ramos at:

(408) 263-5352

LilRamos@pacbell.net

or online at

<http://www.129aha.org>

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>SIZES</u>
Logo Jacket or Vest	\$65 - \$80	
Logo Polo Shirts - Men's & Ladies	\$22	M, L, XL, & 2XL
Logo Baseball Cap	\$15	
Large Jacket Patch	\$10	
Small Shirt / Hat Patch	\$5	
Logo Pin	\$5	
129 th 50 th Anniversary Commemorative Coin	\$5	

All items can be shipped. Shipping and handling are EXTRA. All items are sent via U.S. Mail.

All profits are used for 129 AHA benefit projects.

Have you moved? Know a former member of the 129th who isn't a member yet?

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / CHANGE OF INFORMATION FORM 2010 Dues \$15.00

NAME: _____ SPOUSE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ST: _____ ZIP+4: _____ + _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

RANK: _____ 129TH SERVICE DATES FROM: _____ TO _____

Please complete the above information and mail to:

129th Alumni & Heritage Association

c/o Col John L. Ruppel, Jr. (ret)

6718 Zerillo Dr.

Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

**If your personal information has changed,
PLEASE USE THIS FORM AND NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY!!**

Form is available at www.129aha.org

Did you notice a difference in your CRDP payment?

DFAS Newsletter – August 2010

Beginning with the June 1, 2010 paycheck, Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay (CRDP) is being rounded down to the nearest dollar amount, rather than paid to the exact penny. This change is being made to adhere to legal requirements.

This change will be applied to all future payments, including any future retroactive computations. Because this change represents less than one dollar per month, we will not recoup previous payments that were not rounded down.

New to the Gang

Our Newest Members

A1C Hai Huynh
A1C Parker Imrie
MSgt Michael Kaufenberg
A1C Kevin MacNeill

Welcome!

Do you know someone who has been affiliated with the 129th RQW or its predecessor organizations - and is not a member of the Association? Let's get them signed up!

Have you moved lately?

DFAS Newsletter – August 2010

Your mailing address is one of the most important pieces of information that you have on file at DFAS. If you've moved recently or have a new P.O. Box, please notify us to ensure that your Retiree Account Statements, tax forms and other important documents will reach you in a timely manner.

If you are a retiree please mail your address change to:

DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130

Fax DFAS Retired Pay at 1-800-469-6559

If you are an annuitant please mail your address change to:

DFAS U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London, KY 40742-7131

Fax DFAS Annuitant Pay at 1-800-982-8459

Or, both retirees and annuitants may call DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay directly at 1-800-321-1080.

If submitting your request in writing, please include both your old and new mailing address, along with the effective date for the new address. In addition, please include your name, social security number and signature with date on your request.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION
AND
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Col John L. Ruppel, Jr. – (209) 869-2879
J-L.Ruppel@att.net

VICE PRESIDENT

LTC Steven L. James – (925) 974-1820
SLJames@backgroundprofiles.com

SECRETARY - TREASURER

LTC David P. Russell – (209) 551-8077
dprussell1@sbcglobal.net

DIRECTORS

LTC Jesse Craddock – (650) 968-0446
B25jay@sbcglobal.net

SMSgt Joaquin “Joe” Preciado
grumpy4lif@comcast.net

CCMS Liliana Ramos – (408) 263-5352
LilRamos@pacbell.net

CCMS Douglas B. Sale – (408) 786-9339
douglas.sale@sbcglobal.net

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR

CCMS Liliana Ramos – (408) 263-5352
LilRamos@pacbell.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lynda Taft Fawcett – (916) 349-1019
LTFAWCETT@hotmail.com

129th Alumni & Heritage Assn.
C/O Col John L. Ruppel, Jr. (Ret)
6718 Zerillo Drive
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Are You Missing in Action?

Dead Letter Department

Have you moved recently - or not so recently? Do we have your correct mail and e-mail addresses & phone number? Please let us know when you move.

The newsletter is mailed out with a request for address correction. The post office does not forward the newsletter to you – nor do they return it to us. They charge us 75¢ for providing your forwarding address. Then we update your file, but you do not get a newsletter until next edition unless you request an electronic copy. Total additional cost to the association is nearly \$1.00 per returned newsletter.

Please take a moment to remember the 129th AHA when you notify your correspondents of your new address. A member information form is included in every issue.

Col. John L. Ruppel, Jr. (Ret.)
6718 Zerillo Drive
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122
E-mail: J-L.RUPPEL@ATT.NET

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERBANK, CA
PERMIT #20



It's Back to School Time
Drive Carefully

