



RETIREE



TIMES

A publication of the Vandenberg Air Force Base Retiree Activities Office, 30 SW/CVR 747 Nebraska Ave., Suite A200, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437 Phone : (805) 606-5474

Summer 2001

Vandenberg AFB Calif.

Vol. 1 No. 3



Col. Richard Strathearn, 30th Space Wing vice commander, presents Cmdr. Earl Gustafson, U.S. Navy (Ret.), a volunteer at the Vandenberg Retirees Activities Office with the Air Force Retiree Council Volunteer of the Year certificate as Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney, Retiree Project Officer looks on.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

By Col Myrna-Lynne Whitney

*30 SW/CVR (Individual Mobilization Augmentee)
Retiree Project Officer*

On June 6, Colonel Richard Strathearn, 30th Space Wing Vice Commander, presented retired Navy Commander Earl "Gus" Gustafson with the Air Force Retiree Council's Volunteer of the Year certificate. As editor of the retiree quarterly newspaper, "The Retiree Times," Gustafson spends innumerable hours, working at home and in the Retiree Center, on the publication that has a distribution of almost 6,000 military retirees. He not only prepares the paper for publication, but also does considerable research, and writes numerous articles for the paper. Gustafson began editing the RAO's newsletter in 1999; however, when printing costs threatened the newsletter's production, he worked with past RAO Director Lt. Col. John Konop to change the format to a

newspaper style and have advertising pay for the printing. This was an ingenious move since the RAO has no budget or funds.

Again, when exorbitant mailing costs threatened the newspaper's existence, "Gus" and Konop worked with the contractor base distribution personnel to develop bulk rate mail for Vandenberg. This effort saved substantial costs and created a service for other Base agencies to use.

"Gus" spent months reworking a 6,000-name mailing list, obtained from various military organizations, to ensure its accuracy. When newsletters were returned, he edited the database and augmented information from sign-in lists from the Retiree Activities Office (RAO). Today, the list is accurate and compatible with the mailing contractor's software for printing bar-coded labels. This is quite an accomplishment especially

See Award Page 7

MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

The **third Thursday** of each month at 1 p.m. in the Retiree Center, Bldg 10364 – Base Exchange area, across from the Four Seasons' store – retirees gather to hear guest speakers, socialize, and enjoy cookies and coffee. The schedule through December is as follows:

July

19 July – **Potluck at 1200. Meeting at 1300.**

Organizing/preserving personal information (i.e. important documents, photos, medical and personal family history)

August

16 August – "Living to 102" – body, mind, and spirit

September

20 September – 30th Security Forces Squadron – home and travel security

October

18 October – CEO Lompoc Hospital –health care issues

* November

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY – Friday – 16 Nov Pacific Coast Club

* December

HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON – Thursday – 13 Dec – Retiree Center

** Denotes different date than 3rd Thursday of the month and for Appreciation Day different location*

NEED A BREAK FROM SHOPPING? STOP FOR "R&R" AT THE RAO

When you need a little rest and relaxation from your base exchange shopping, the RAO is the place to visit. You can help yourself to a cup of coffee and some cookies, visit with fellow retirees, catch up on the latest in benefits and even watch informative videos! There is also a TRICARE "Q&A" video starring Col. Alan Newton, 30th Medical Group Commander. Two extra TRICARE videos are available for you to take home on a loan basis. Another video covers the Korean War Memorial and P-40 dedications. Enjoy these videos in a comfortable setting at the RAO. Why not stop in the next time you are at Vandenberg?

TRICARE For Life and TRICARE Plus

The 30th Medical Group at Vandenberg AFB will conduct informational briefings for Military healthcare eligible and Medicare eligible retirees and spouses interested in TRICARE For Life and TRICARE Plus at the Vandenberg clinic. If you are eligible for this great new benefit, please join us at one of our seminars (see below for program eligibility requirements).

TRICARE for Life consists of two parts: TRICARE For Life acting as a 2nd payer to Medicare, and TRICARE Plus which offers enrollment into a Military Treatment Facility. If you decide to enroll in TRICARE Plus at the Vandenberg clinic, your primary care needs will be managed by military providers. If you require specialty care beyond the scope of our clinic, you will be referred to a civilian Medicare provider and use your Medicare Part B coverage with TRICARE acting as a secondary payer in most cases. We will review this process in detail at the briefing.

You are eligible for TRICARE for Life if:

- You are a Medicare-eligible military retiree, including retired guard members and reservists
- You are a Medicare-eligible family member, or survivor (dependent parents and parents-in-law are not included)
- You are a former spouse that was eligible for TRICARE before age 65 (please contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office Beneficiary line at 1-800-538-9552 for other criteria that must be met for eligibility under this beneficiary category)
- You are eligible for Medicare Part A and enrolled in Part B

TRICARE Plus at the Vandenberg Clinic is offered to those eligible for TRICARE For Life and who reside in the following Zip Codes: (next column)

93427	93429	93434
93436	93437	93438
93444	93454	93455
93456	93457	93458
93463	93464	

Enrollment into TRICARE Plus will be limited by available capacity at the Vandenberg clinic.

If you want to learn more about the TRICARE for Life or TRICARE Plus programs, please join us at one of the following briefings:

Thursday, 16 August

0900 / 1300 / 1500 Base Theater

The briefings will inform you about the services you will receive if you apply and are selected for primary care at the Vandenberg AFB clinic under the TRICARE Plus program. Application and selection procedures will be clarified. Applications will be distributed at these briefings. We look forward to meeting with you and taking care of you in the future.

If you are unable to attend a briefing on 16 August, and are interested in obtaining more information regarding TRICARE For Life you may call (888) 363-5433.

If you are interested in applying for TRICARE Plus at Vandenberg Air Force Base, applications will also be available at the Retiree Affairs Activity Office or the Health Benefits Office located inside of the Vandenberg AFB TRICARE Service Center, between 17 August and 31 August.

All applications must be received or postmarked no later than 31 August 2001. (Source: 30th Medical Group)

Sunday Commissary Hours Change

Vandenberg commissary hours of operation on Sundays were changed to open at 10 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. starting April 29. For more information call, 734-3354, extension 225.

(From S&M Times)

RETIREE TIMES

Col. Robert M. Worley II USAF

Commander 30th Space Wing

Col. Richard Strathearn USAF

Vice Commander 30th Space Wing/RAO Coordinator

Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney USAFR

RAO Project Manager

Cmdr. Earl Gustafson USN (Ret.)

Newsletter Editor

Staff. Sgt Andrew Leonhard USAF

Technical Advisor 30th Space Wing/ Public Affairs

PHC John McGraw USN (Ret.)

Photographer

The *Retiree Times* is published quarterly, Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer, by Lompoc Record Publications, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with the 30th Space Wing. This commercial enterprise Air Force newsletter is an authorized unofficial publication for members of the U.S. military services who are retired and their families and surviving spouses residing in the Vandenberg AFB catchment area. Contents of the *Retiree Times* are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

The appearance of advertising in the publication, including any inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, or Lompoc Record Publications, of products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

Non-advertisement content is compiled from various sources by the Vandenberg Retired Activities Office. Even though reasonable effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the contents, no guarantee of such accuracy is made nor should be assumed. Direct questions on the various topics to the agencies and phone numbers listed in the articles. All photographs, unless otherwise indicated are RAO or Air Force Photos.

Publication deadlines are the 15th of March, June, September and December. The Retiree Activities Office reserves the right to edit all submissions for style and space. Send submissions to 30SW/CVR, 747 Nebraska Ave., Suite A200, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-1461 or via facsimile to (805) 606-0437. The phone number is (805) 606-5474. Email may be addressed to <retirees.office@vandenberg.af.mil>.

IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

By William Franco, Vandenberg AFB

Commissary Store Manager

Putting the right products on the shelves—at a price that delivers the biggest savings to commissary shoppers—has always been one of our goals. Now, with access to item movement and pricing data collected from the commissaries' front-end systems, as well as sales data from the private sector, the agency's Marketing Business Unit is delivering the goods.

In the past, industry manufacturers and brokers had access to some of this data and occasionally shared it with DeCA, if it was relevant to a sales presentation. Now, with routine access to this information, DeCA buyers have a tool that allows them to determine more accurately when the price offered is the best price, and whether shoppers, in fact, want the product.

Scan data allows the commissary buyer to make a direct comparison of DeCA prices with private-sector prices...to determine if there is a savings for the commissary patron. With results from the latest survey showing patron savings now at 29.2 percent, this best-price strategy is helping DeCA move closer to its goal of delivering 30 percent savings by fiscal 2002, as items within a category compete to maintain their place on commissary shelves.

With this in mind, the Vandenberg Commissary is committed to getting the "biggest bang for the buck" for its patrons. DeCA's first agency wide case-lot sale will take place on September 8-9 and the Vandenberg Commissary will be included in this extravaganza. With well over one hundred items, the list is too long to mention, but you can expect many of your favorites will be listed. Hours and details of this extravaganza will be posted at a later date in Base advertising and the "Space & Missile Times."

RETIREES RECOGNIZED IN VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE AWARD CEREMONY

The 30th Space Wing recognized more 480 volunteers in an award ceremony 25 April at the Pacific Coast Club. Twenty-six Retiree Activities Office (RAO) volunteers received certificates. Robert Eastwood, RAO Manager, and Earl Gustafson, "Retiree Times" Editor, were nominated for the "Volunteer Excellence Award (VEA)." The Air Force established the VEA program to recognize military and federal retirees, current federal civilians and family members who perform outstanding community service of a sustained, direct and consequential nature.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE COMPUTER AGE?

If you need help in dealing with the computer age, why not sign up for some introductory computer training at the Retiree Activities Center? Every Wednesday and Friday from 1030 until 1330, Mr. Chuck Brown – an RAO volunteer – will be available to offer basic computer training. There are six computers and two printers ready for your use. We are working to have internet service online possibly by early July. For more details and to register for training, please come into the Retiree Center, opposite the Four Seasons' Store in the Base Exchange area, or telephone (805) 606-5474.

NEW COMMANDER TO VISIT RAO

The new 30th Space Wing Commander Colonel Robert M. Worley II, is very interested in Vandenberg's retiree population. He is scheduled to visit the Retiree Activities Center on Thursday, 19 July at 1230. The retiree monthly meeting and potluck is planned for noon and 1 p.m. respectively. So, retirees this is your opportunity to meet our new Commander. Come and join us in giving Col Worley a warm "Team Vandenberg" welcome.

TRIPS, TOURS AND CRUISES

Vandenberg Leisure Tours is in Building 10122, the Services Center, located near the corner of California Blvd. and Washington Ave. It offers a wide variety of excursions to suit every taste. In addition, the tour office lists favorable rates at hotels and motels in the vicinity of Southern California theme parks and Los Angeles Airport. Active duty, retired military, and civil service personnel, government contractors, families, and guests are eligible to participate. The office publishes the "Tripletter" listing upcoming events. You can learn more about opportunities by calling (805) 606-7976 and asking to be placed on the mailing list. The address is P.O. Box 5459, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-0459. You might also visit their new website at www.vandenberg-leisure-tours.org. For complete information on the following upcoming trips, contact the tour office:

Jul 15-18	Laughlin Special, \$69 per person, single add \$15
Jul 21	Universal Studios, \$35, transportation only
Jul 27-28	Laguna Pageant of Masters and Getty Museum, \$150 per person, single add \$70
Aug 4	Roaring Camp and Big Trees, \$75
Aug 9-12	San Diego, \$265 per person sharing, single \$435
Aug 18	Mets/Dodgers, \$45, reserved seating
Aug 23-5 Sep	Scotland & Ireland, Edinburgh Tattoo, Loch Lomond, Dublin etc., \$3,095 per person sharing/single add \$490
Sep 1	Cardinals/Dodgers, \$45, reserved seating
Sep 12	Lion King, Pantages Theatre, transportation and orchestra seating, \$110 per person
Sep 14	Kiss Me Kate, Shubert Theatre, \$98
Sep 16-19	Las Vegas, \$145 per person sharing
Sep 21-30	Alaska Inside Passage & Coastal Cruise, from \$1499
Sep 23-26	Catalina, \$215 per person sharing
Oct 3-14	Scenic Southwest & Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, \$785 per person, single add \$395

(Source: Tripletter)

Retiree Activities Center

Building 10364, Base Exchange Area
Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday -
1000 to 1400
Closed Saturday, Sunday and Federal
Holidays

AAFES & DECA STOP REQUIRING SSN ON CHECKS

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) plans to abandon its long-standing practice of requiring customers' Social Security numbers on personal checks. Stars and Stripes reports that the need to verify Social Security numbers remains, but there are other ways of getting the information. "The real push behind this [change] is that people just don't like to give out their Social Security numbers," says Army Maj. Mitchell Edgar, spokesman for AAFES-Europe.

Similar concerns led the Defense Commissary Agency

(DECA) to announce in March that it was amending its check-cashing policy. The DECA's new procedures took affect in May. Like AAFES, the commissary agency will ask its cashiers to type into their computerized registers a customer's Social Security number. That number, obtained from a person's ID card, will be checked by an internal data base, as is currently the practice. The Social Security number would remain in DECA's secure data base until the personal check clears.

Also, beginning this summer,

AAFES will begin installing a Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) reader system that will scan checks, recording such basic information as routing, check and account numbers. That data along with the Social Security number will fulfill AAFES' needs while providing added privacy and security to customers. The AAFES planned to introduce MICR in stateside stores during April, beginning on the East Coast and moving west. Stores in the European and the Pacific theaters will receive the new system in July and August. (Source: website)

PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE WITH OHI

If you have TRICARE and Other Health Insurance (OHI), but your OHI policy does not include prescription coverage, be sure to contact a TRICARE regional claim center to change your OHI information to reflect your need for prescription coverage. Call the toll-free TRICARE Pharmacy Help Line at 877-363-6337 to find out what information and documentation is required.

Also, the Tricare National Mail Order Pharmacy (NMOP) Program can only be used by people with OHI if their required medication is not covered under their OHI plan or if they exceed the dollar limit on the OHI plan. Otherwise, OHI still stands as the first payer and the Tricare NMOP may not be used. (Source: Tricare)

14th AIR FORCE COMMANDER TO VISIT CENTER

Vandenberg military retirees are looking forward to welcoming Major General William Looney III and his wife to the Retiree Center on Thursday, **26 July at 1 p.m.** The General is very interested in the Center and participated last year in Retiree Appreciation Day ceremonies. He has not seen the Center since the new furniture has been delivered so he is enthused to visit and meet some of our retirees.

MILITARY CAMPER WEB SITE

New Web Site Assists Military Campers, RVers
The Army News Service reports that military campers and RVers can now find their way on America's open highways thanks to a new interactive Army Morale, Welfare, Recreation (MWR) Outdoor Recreation Web site. Visitors to the site will find information on the locations of military RV parks and campsites at installations throughout the United States, directions from the nearest major highway, phone numbers, amenities, the number of pads and campsites, and fees. It also lists any cabins, cottages, or duplexes available for rent. Future additions to the Web site will include a trip computer to determine mileage, local on- and off-post recreational opportunities, and inter-service MWR specials for RVers and campers. MWR eventually hopes to add information about

RV parks and campsites in Europe to the new Web site at <http://www.pathsacrossamerica.com>
More information about MWR is at <http://www.armymwr.com> and <http://www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/cars.htm>

(SOURCE: INTERNET)

RETIREES CONTINUE TO GIVE

By Col Myrna-Lynne Whitney

30th SW/CVR (Individual Mobilization Augmentee) – Retiree Project Officer

Thanks to the generosity of **four very special military retirees**, May and June were especially prosperous months for Vandenberg's Joint Retiree Center. Lieutenant Colonel Harlan Oakes, United States Army retired, who frequently visits the Center and participates in the monthly meetings and potlucks, started the "avalanche" of good fortune with his donation of \$100 to the Center. As a long-time member of the Vandenberg community, Oakes commented that "for many years not much was done for retirees" and, now he is pleased that "retirees have a comfortable Center to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow retirees."

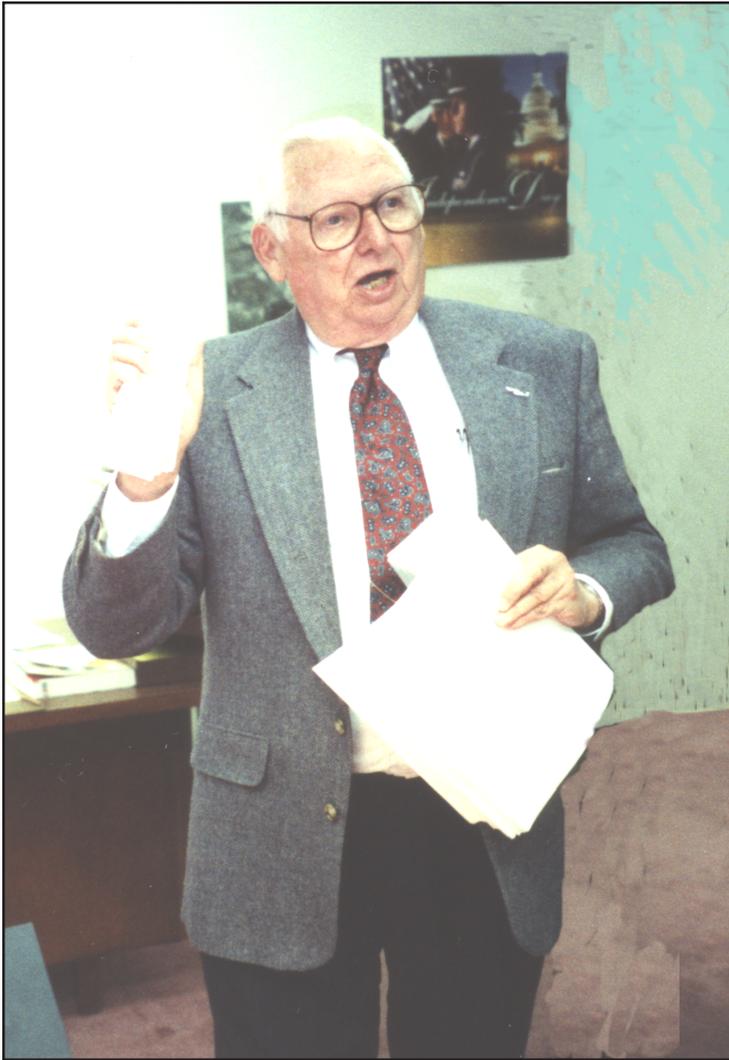
Following the Army's donation, the "Marines landed," when Gy/Sergeant Ed Larson walked in with the United States and Marine Corps flags and a gift of \$100. Larson's flags triggered the idea that the Center should fly the colors of all the services; consequently, funds are now available to purchase the other flags.

SEE FLAG PAGE 6



(Top Right) Lt. Col. Harlan Oakes USA Ret.; (Right) Chief Photographer's Mate (Ret.) John McGraw with Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney; (Bottom left to right) Col. Whitney, Lt. Chuck Brown USN Ret., Gunnery Sgt. Ed Larson USMC Ret.,

Master Sgt. Bob Eastwood USAF Ret., Lt. Col. Esten Carper Jr., USMC Ret., Radioman First Class Gary Schnereger USN Ret.; (Left) Tech. Sgt. John Black USAF Ret. with Col. Whitney.



Mr. William Pate, Program Coordinator, from the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), Santa Maria Office, addressed military retirees at the April potluck and meeting in the Joint Retiree Center. He advised 42 retirees on the services that HICAP provides and answered their many questions. Mr. Pate is not a “stranger” to our retirees as he supported Appreciation Day 2000 with a HICAP information table. For details on HICAP, retirees may call (805) 928-5663 or (800) 434-0222. HICAP office is located at 208 West Main Street, Suite B, Santa Maria, Calif. 93458.

GAME DAY!!!

Cribbage? Chess? Bridge? Checkers? What do you like to play? Come to the Retiree Activities Center **every Tuesday** to join your fellow retirees for some fun times. For good old-fashioned companionship and some refreshments, come and enjoy **GAME DAY**.

RAO WEB SITE COMING SOON TO YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN

For those retirees with computers and access to the internet, you soon will be able to log on to the Vandenberg Joint RAO web site. Items that we are planning to have on-line are as follows: our quarterly newsletter “The Retiree Times,” pictures of the Retiree Center and our volunteer staff; programs, which will include immediate information on our monthly meetings, potlucks, and important announcements, and, National Society of Military Widows (NSMW), Central Coast Chapter, information items. The web site should be on-line by mid-to-late July. For more information, please call the RAO at (805) 606-5474.

PRESIDENTIAL GREETING

You can have the White House send a birthday card to anyone celebrating their 80th (or older) birthday or an anniversary card to a couple celebrating their 50th (or more) anniversary. The request should be sent to the Greetings Office at least six weeks in advance. Send the date of the event and the names and address of the recipients by letter, facsimile or email to:

Greetings Office, Room 39
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: (202) 456-7610 Fax:
(202) 395-1232
Email:
president@whitehouse.gov

FLAG FROM PAGE 5

Defending the Navy’s honor, Chief Photographer’s Mate John McGraw, a retired Navy photographer—who serves as the Center’s photographer, wrote a check for his \$100 donation. McGraw has been a staunch supporter of the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) since its grand opening in July 1999. He covers monthly meetings, Appreciation Days, and any other activity that may occur; also, John generously donates all the film and photos to the Center.

When Technical Sergeant John Black, Air Force retired, learned that the other services had made these donations, he eagerly followed suit with his \$100 contribution. A relatively new volunteer, Black also provided three packages of plastic “wall pockets” to organize the many information handouts that the Center has available for its customers. He participates in all the social events and is a super helper in setting up for these activities.

So, thanks to the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force representatives for these gracious gifts which, along with the donation from the 30th Space Wing’s Chapel, we will be able to establish an official account for the Retiree Activities Center. As an official government organization, the RAO’s donated funds are controlled differently than those of private or non-profit agencies. Also, there is a limited amount that the wing commander is permitted to accept.

Society of Military Widows

By Faye Gillis

Society of Military Widows Secretary

The local chapter of the SMW has proved to be an attraction for many of the area women. We would like to get the word out so that all military widows are aware of its existence.

Meetings are the second Wednesday of every month at the Retirees Activity Center on Vandenberg AFB. This is directly across from the Four Seasons Store in the community center complex.

Various activities are being planned that will appeal to all. Some members recently took a day trip to Monterey that was offered by the base information, tickets and tours office. Future plans include more day trips and dinner meetings at local area

restaurants. Guest speakers will be lined up for the regular scheduled meetings to offer tips and information on such subjects as car maintenance, home security and selecting and operating computers. Suggestions for other topics are welcome.

Also, free computer classes are being offered in the retirees' center every Wednesday and Friday, between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. These are taught by Chuck Brown. The facilities and activities at the center are open to the military widow as well as retirees and their spouses.

For more information call (805) 606-5474.

DoD TRICARE Mailing

During the month of July, Medicare-eligible military retirees and surviving spouses should receive a mailing from the Department of Defense. The purpose is to ascertain the beneficiaries intent regarding any supplemental insurance they may have. It will contain a letter asking beneficiaries to indicate whether they intend to drop any existing supplemental insurance and the effective date of such action. The purpose is to expedite the processing of Tricare claims once Tricare for Life becomes effective on October 1, 2001. A form for the beneficiaries response along with additional information on Tricare for Life will be included. If you do not receive this mailing, the members DEERS registration should be verified. (Source: TROA)

Award from Page 1

since retirees do not always notify the RAO when they change addresses.

As an active Retired Officers' Association (TROA) member, "Gus" worked the TROA information table for the 1999 and 2000 Retiree Appreciation Days. He served in four TROA major chapter leadership positions: sergeant-at-arms; second and first vice presidents and as president. As president, he increased the membership 25 percent in a few months. Similarly, "Gus" put these recruiting talents to work for the RAO and has recruited volunteers for the Retiree Center.

Commander Gustafson is a "charter member" and real "cornerstone" of the RAO. He is totally dedicated, dependable, and responsible – a true asset to any organization – and, especially to the RAO. However, he is very quiet and unassuming – never looks for "credit" and not one for "showmanship;" consequently, this article and photograph are really against his wishes. But, you deserve to know the "man-behind-the-scenes." If it were not for "Gus'" efforts, none of us would be reading this paper today. We all thank and salute you, "Gus," for being a true team player and for utmost dedication in keeping us informed.



Mr. Richard Gray, Santa Barbara County Veterans' Services Representative, Santa Maria Office, shown here with Lt. Chuck Brown USN Ret., (Left) talked with retirees on various veterans' and widows/widowers' benefits at the May monthly meeting. After his briefing, Mr. Gray spent an hour in answering individuals' questions. He stated that either he or Mr. Mozart Booker, at the Lompoc VA, is available to assist veterans and their families with specific issues. For details you may call the VA Santa Maria Office, (805) 346-7160; or VA Lompoc Office, (805) 737-7900.

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is available for retirees. Its telephone number for enrollment is toll-free (888) 838-8737. The website is <http://www.ddpdelta.org>.

TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Questions

Q: What if I have other health insurance? How does my TRICARE Senior Pharmacy coverage apply?

A: TRICARE beneficiaries with other health insurance have "double coverage," and basically, TRICARE is the second payer. TRICARE pays after the other health insurance has paid a claim for covered drugs, or when the beneficiary's prescription coverage under that plan is exhausted for the year.

SEE PHARMACY PAGE 11

TIMES HAVE CHANGED!

By Pat Nuth, RAO Volunteer/Member of SMW

Central Coast Chapter (Widows Group)

On June 26, 2001 Colonel Whitney, Mr. Wray Stitch, RAO volunteer, and I attended the Base Advisory Council meeting. I want to tell you that we are in "good hands" with all that is being done for the active military and the issues that concern the retired community. For the active military, the issues are the same, but the items are different. Most of us didn't think of baseball batting cages, except when we went to a ball game. And, home ceiling fans were truly a luxury — we were happy with a fan in the window.

But, times have changed — even for us — the retired folks. Now, we want to know if the base service station can provide diesel fuel for our recreational vehicles? Why can't we go down to the beaches? And, why can't we buy furniture at the base exchange? These issues were all part of the Advisory Council's information.

The diesel fuel question was answered with "not at this time" because of the added expense to install the tanks and not a great enough demand for the product.

The base beaches are now open, from 8:00 am until 6:00pm, Friday to Monday, on a limited basis — half a mile at each of the following beaches: Surf, Minuteman, and Wall. Violations will result in fines and eventual beach closure if the set violations are exceeded.

And, now, you may purchase furniture at the BX.

Keep your eyes open for "best value" items throughout the commissary, which includes the meat and produce departments. Also, watch for future "case lot" sales. Your Vandenberg Commissary and Base Exchange are really working to serve the retirees.

As you can see your base is working very hard to take care of you and a lot is going on that we seldom hear. These are hardworking active duty military and civilians trying to give us what we ask for and helping us to enjoy our retirement. A special thanks from the retiree community. Thanks for letting the retirees know what is going on and for letting us participate as members of the team.



Captain Michael Christy, attorney, from the 30th Space Wing Staff Judge Advocate's Office shown here along with Senior Airman Jacklyn Raimondi, briefed retirees on wills, trusts, and other legal services at the June retiree meeting. Capt Christy reminded retirees that the Base Legal Office provides these services for FREE. For more details retirees may call (805) 605-6220; or, visit the legal office in Bldg 10577, first floor.

Supplemental Health Insurance

New Supplemental Health Insurance for military retirees who are also retired Federal and Postal Annuitants and are Tricare-eligible is available. An Federal Employee Health Benefite Plan Alternative Supplement is a new group policy that will give you 100% coverage when combined with your government entitlement for only \$62 a month. Highlights of the plan include no preexisting conditions, no deductible, no cost share, no copays, 100% doctor's office visits, 100% hospitalization and 100% pharmacy. For more information on how you and your family can take advantage of this 100% supplemental medical coverage, go to: <http://www.fedweek.com> and click on the "Group Champus Supplement" button on the right hand side. (Source: FedWeek)

Medicare/Tricare Claims

Retirees have asked the RAO how Tricare will know when to pay a provider of health care. Here is a brief explanation of how it is believed the claim for benefits will be processed. In most cases, providers now bill Medicare directly for payment. Medicare will process the provider's claim and send the Medicare payment to the provider. The claim will then be automatically processed by Tricare using the paid Medicare claim as a basis for documentation. The copay will also be sent to the provider by Tricare. The beneficiary should receive an explanation of benefits from both Medicare and Tricare indicating both have paid their share. For further information, contact the Health Benefits Office at the 30th Medical Group, Vandenberg AFB. Additional information is available on the Tricare website www.tricare.osd.mil.

ID Cards

Most military retirees and their family members over the age of 64 carry identification cards, the back of which indicates they are not eligible for civilian medical care. Currently, there is no plan to replace, nor is there a need to replace these ID cards. Tricare for Life benefits require only a current military ID card and also being registered in the DEERS. The statement on the back of the card is no longer relevant. The July DoD mailing mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter will include a document in the form of a card that instructs the provider how to file claims and other information. (Source: DoD)

VA Benefits for Testing Fees

When a veteran takes a test for occupational certification or license, their VA benefits might pay for their testing fees. A recent change in VA regulations allows for payment of those benefits for tests such as state bar examinations or a plumber certification. Benefits pay up to \$2,000 per examination.

To qualify, the tester must be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill or the Veterans Educational Assistance Program. Survivors of veterans who qualify for the Dependents Educational Assistance Program are also eligible. The test must meet certain VA criteria.

Questions about this benefit may be addressed to the VA education service at 888-442-4551.

(Source: FRA)

Around The World In Ninety Days

(ATWIND)

WHAT is ATWIND?: It's a computer based game and it's also your chance to win thousands of fantastic prizes while participating in exciting events and activities around Vandenberg from 1 June to 31 August.

WHY play ATWIND? The more you play, the more chances you have at winning some great prizes. In addition, you'll help Team Vandenberg earn up to \$55,000 in Quality of Life money! To qualify as an ATWIND participant and help Vandenberg AFB get the \$55,000, players must make **two** game piece moves. Retirees and their family members are strongly encouraged to play and make at least two moves in support of the Vandenberg Team.

WHO can play ATWIND? All active duty members of the Armed Forces and their family members, DoD civilians, **retired military members and their family members.**

HOW do I play ATWIND? It's simple. Just follow the instructions you'll be given when visiting the web site or call the toll free number. The web address is: **www.atwind.com** The toll free number is: 1-888-597-9960. You'll be asked first for your Personal Identification Number (PIN). Your PIN is your birthdate in dd/mm/yy format plus the last 4 digits of your social security number. For instance, if your birthday is 14 March 1960 and your SSN is 123-45-6789, your PIN # is 1403606789. Everytime you log onto the ATWIND web site, you'll be asked for your PIN. If you haven't yet registered, you'll need to answer a few questions (name, address, email, etc) and most importantly provide your telephone number - that's how you'll be notified if you're a winner. After you've registered and entered your PIN, you'll be asked to enter a game piece number. If you haven't registered, your first game piece is free and that number is: 9999-0011-111. You'll earn 1,100 miles on your quest around the world.

WHERE do I get game pieces? Lots of different places at different times. Keep your eye on each Friday's edition of Space and Missile Times for a listing of where you can play ATWIND for that week. In addition, each email version of Services E-Vents will tell you where to play ATWIND. And log onto the 30th Services Squadron's website: **www.30SVS.com** each week for a detailed listing of all the places where you can play ATWIND.

Here are some of the ways for retired military members and their families to get game pieces:

Join the Pacific Coast Club	Become a Youth Sports coach (3 game pieces)
Get a friend to join the Pacific Coast Club	Review last will and testament at base legal office
Take Golf Lessons	Take a college course
Purchase a Season Swim Pass	Purchase (2) 12 packs, (2) 20 ounce, or 4 fountain drinks
Participate in summer swim lessons (2 game pieces)	(coke, diet coke, sprite) at SVS, AAFES, or DECA -
Rent an ATWIND camping package from Equipment Checkout	Bring receipt to HQ to receive game piece
Attend gun safety course for beginners	Donate blood (2 game pieces)
Bring your pet to the Vet Clinic for summer flea & tick protection	Volunteer (earn up to 5 game pieces depending on volunteer hours/month)
Register your pet or update records for your pet at the Vet Clinic	Purchase driving range punchcard
Chaperone a Youth program	Attend Boating Safety Course

WHAT happens when I get a game piece? Jump for joy! And then find an internet computer and log that game piece. Remember, you'll enter your PIN Number and then the game piece number. You'll then travel 1,100 more miles around the world and perhaps become an instant game winner.

WHERE can I register my game pieces? On any computer that has internet access. This is an officially sanctioned game, so you can use your work computer at Vandenberg. In addition, visit the library and log on there. Or do it at home. Or visit your ATWIND Headquarters, the Services Center just across from the base Fitness Center, and log on there! But whatever you do, register your game piece! If you don't register, you can't win prizes nor can Vandenberg get any credit towards our quest to earn that Quality of Life money.

WHAT can I win? There are 5 grand prize drawings. As you work your way around the world and get to each destination, you'll be entered in that destination's grand prize drawing. For example, the first destination is Vandenberg. That drawing has a vacation trip for 2 plus \$500 in cash, a COMPAQ computer system, mini-music system and \$500 in cash. In addition, instant game piece winners can win T-shirts, Services gift certificates, 36" color TVs, \$100 or \$500 or \$1000 cash awards or vacation trips - all for just registering your game piece.

If you have any questions about ATWIND, please call:

30th Services ATWIND Headquarters at the Services Center: 605-8974

30th Services Marketing Department: 605-5095

30th Services Squadron Command Section: 606-5031

Thank you for playing ATWIND and supporting Team Vandenberg!

SPONSORED IN PART BY:

(Source: Col. Cannon, 30th Services)

US AIRLINES - SPRINT - SPRINT PCS - COCA COLA - EARTHLINK - FORD MOTOR COMPANY - TYSON - COMPAQ - US AIRWAYS
(NO FEDERAL ENDORSEMENT OF SPONSORS INTENDED)

Agent Orange and Dioxin-Related Illnesses

It has been reported that the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) has been assisting veterans and their children in receiving compensation for dioxin-related illnesses. According to the VA, about 8,700 veterans and 850 of their children currently receive benefits for dioxin-linked illnesses. But according to the NVLSP, the VA may not have been paying veterans or their widows the full amount owed them under a 1991 ruling by U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson in San Francisco. Judge Henderson recently ruled that the VA must pay the estates of veterans who were owed compensation but who died before the VA got around to paying them. The Justice Department had not decided whether it will challenge that decision, and the deadline for filing an appeal was May 31. Dioxin is a carcinogenic constituent of Agent Orange, a defoliant

sprayed by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. By the end of 2000, more than three-dozen illnesses had been officially linked to dioxin. Judge Henderson repeatedly chastised the VA for ignoring veterans' claims and failing to follow his rulings on compensating them for their illnesses. NVLSP officials say there may be hundreds more veterans and widows who are owed benefits. Veterans and surviving family members of Vietnam veterans can obtain information about VA benefits for Agent Orange exposure by writing to the National Veterans Legal Services Program, 2001 Street NW, Suite 610, Washington, D.C. 20009-1125; calling the NVLSP at (202) 265-8305, ext. 119; or e-mailing the NVLSP at nvlsp@nvlsp.org. The NVLSP Web site is at <http://www.nvlsp.org> <<<http://www.nvlsp.org>>

MEDICARE PART B WITH TRICARE

TRICARE will be a second payer to Medicare when both programs cover health care services. There are some cases where health care is covered by one program and not the other. Medicare Part A with TRICARE was described in the Spring 2001 newsletter. Following is a description of the relation between TRICARE and Medicare Part B.

When a doctor provides a service covered by Medicare and TRICARE a hospitalized or outpatient beneficiary, Medicare pays the entire bill except for the Medicare annual deductible (\$100) and the beneficiary's cost-share (20 percent). Tricare pays the deductible and cost share and the beneficiary pays nothing. (Note: Even if the doctor does not participate in Medicare, he/she is prohibited by law from charging the beneficiary more than 115 percent of the Medicare allowable amount.)

SERVICES THAT ARE PAYABLE BY MEDICARE, BUT NOT TRICARE

When a beneficiary receives care that is covered by Medicare but is not a benefit of TRICARE (chiropractic services, for example), Medicare pays the allowable amount, minus the Medicare deductible and cost-share. TRICARE pays nothing. The beneficiary is responsible for the portion of the bill not paid by Medicare.

SERVICES THAT ARE PAYABLE BY TRICARE, BUT NOT MEDICARE

When care is a benefit through TRICARE, but is not covered by Medicare, TRICARE becomes primary payer. The beneficiary must pay the TRICARE deductible and cost-share, just like an under-65 retiree, but there is a limit to what the beneficiary must pay. Once the beneficiary pays cost-shares and deductibles equal to \$3000 per fiscal year (sometimes called the "catastrophic cap"), TRICARE pays 100 percent of the allowable charge for covered services. In this case, the beneficiary will receive a bill for, and be legally obligated to pay, the TRICARE deductible and cost share. Generally, the TRICARE deductible is \$150 per person or \$300 per family per fiscal year.

When a beneficiary receives medical care in a geographic location (overseas, for example) not covered by Medicare, Tricare is the beneficiary's only medical benefit. TRICARE will pay for services and supplies, but only if they are "covered." The beneficiary is liable for the TRICARE deductible and cost-share in the same manner as an under-65 year old retiree.

When a beneficiary receives care in a non-DoD government facility (a VA health care facility, for example) for which no Medicare benefits are available, TRICARE pays the beneficiary's legal liability minus the TRICARE deductible and cost-share. The beneficiary is responsible for paying the deductible and cost-share, the same as an under-65 year old retiree. (Source: FRA)

VA Treats "Type 2" Diabetes

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has issued a directive regarding veterans' benefits related to "Type 2" diabetes. By law, the directive became effective as of 7 July but claims were being processed before that date. Access to treatment for this condition and the awarding of disability compensation should be easier for veterans as a result of this action.

"Type 2" diabetes is now included in a long list of diseases that are now recognized as resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. These other diseases include certain cancers, including non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, soft tissue sarcoma, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer and respiratory cancers (including cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus). Also included are certain nerve, liver and skin disorders.

The VA decided to act following a determination by the National Academy of Sciences that there was some evidence to suggest that there might be a link between Agent Orange exposure and "Type 2" diabetes. Veterans who have been exposed to Agent Orange would receive a higher priority for treatment at VA health care facilities. If disability compensation were awarded it would range from \$101 to \$2,107 per month. Upwards of 200,000 Vietnam veterans have "Type 2" diabetes, some of who are already receiving care for other illnesses.

Veterans who have, or suspect they have "Type 2" diabetes should contact the VA. More information can be obtained from the local Veterans Services Offices and the VA website at <http://www.va.gov>. (Source: Col Wuebald)

PHARMACY FROM PAGE 8

Q: What if I have other health insurance, but it does not include prescription coverage?

A: Beneficiaries may need to contact a regional claims center to change their other health insurance information to indicate that they do not have prescription coverage. They should call the toll-free TRICARE Pharmacy Help Line at (877) 363-6337 to find out what information and documentation is required, the telephone and fax numbers, and the address for their regional claims center. If they have double coverage and must fill a prescription before their information is updated, they may have to pay for the prescription initially, and file a claim for reimbursement from TRICARE.

Q: Can I use TRICARE's National Mail Order Program (NMOP) if I have prescription coverage under other health insurance?

A: You may only use the NMOP when their required medication is not covered under their other plan, or if they exceed the dollar limit of coverage under that plan. Otherwise, their other health insurance is still first payer and you may not use the NMOP.

For more information, call the TRICARE Pharmacy Help Line toll-free at 1-877-DOD-MEDS (1-877-363-6337). The Help Line is operational weekdays (Monday through Friday) from 7 a.m.-11 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time. Information also is available on the TRICARE Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy>.

(Source: FRA)

SPECIAL "THANKS" TO ALL WHO SERVED

Dear RAO Volunteers,

April, May and June have been good months for our volunteer corps! First, I want to say "thank you" to Bob Eastwood, who continues in his dedicated role as "resident," full-time volunteer. And, June was a real "test month" for the RAO because Bob went on two weeks leave; and, another regular, Esten Carper, "Carp," was gone. So, all the volunteers had to pitch in to cover the office. Thanks to a real "team effort" and Bob's organization of the office, all went very well. Special "thanks" to the following volunteers, who have been with us for awhile, for taking over and staffing the office: Dick Barkley, Chuck Brown, Faye Gillis, Mary Hale, Betty Hoffman, Pat Nuth, and Wray Stitch.

Next, I want to recognize some new volunteers who joined during the past three months and some of them served during our low-staffing time. A warm welcome to Tony Ayala, John Black, Ed Edwards, Bud Pollock, Tom Rush, and Gary Schnereger. Thank you for joining the RAO "family" and thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

MYRNA-LYNNE WHITNEY, Col, USAFR
30th Space Wing/ CV (Individual Mobilization
Augmentee) – Retiree Project Officer

Jubilee Medal for Normandy Veterans

First minted for veterans of the Normandy invasion who returned to France for the 50th D-Day anniversary, the Normandy Medal of Jubilee of Liberty is now available to D-Day Veterans who were unable to attend the anniversary festivities. To find out more about medal qualifications Normandy veterans should contact their representative to the Congress for more information. (Source: FRA)

Correction

The front page of the last issue of the "Retiree Times" should have indicated that it was the Spring 2001 issue rather than the date. It should also have been numbered as Vol. 1, No. 2.

New 30th Space Wing Commander Reports

Col. Robert M. Worley II has succeeded Col. Stephen Lanning as 30th Space Wing Commander in a formal change-of-command ceremony at the parade grounds here on May 30. He reports to Vandenberg from his former assignment as Chief of the Space Superiority Division, Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Programs, Washington, D.C.

Worley graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in May 1978 with a bachelor's degree in organizational behavior and completed his master's in 1980 in industrial psychology at St. Mary's University in San Antonio Texas.

Worley carries on a military heritage inspired by his father, the late Maj. Gen. Robert F. Worley, who flew in World War II and was killed in action while flying over South Vietnam.

Adapted from Space & Missile Times article by SSGT Leonhard)

Military Retiree and Annuitant Pay Services

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service has announced its intent to award ACS Government Services of Rockville, MD, a contract to provide pay services to its 2.5 million Department of Defense retirees and annuitants. This action is a result of a U.S. Office of Management and Budget cost comparison study and is expected to save the Department of Defense approximately \$36 million over the life of the contract. The award to ACS is tentative pending a public review period. During this period, interested parties, such as affected employees, may file an appeal. Following the public review, ACS would be expected to assume pay services late this calendar year. While operations will stay in their current locations - Denver and Cleveland - during the first year of operations, ACS will consolidate most business operations at the Cleveland site during their second year of operations. (Source: AFPC)

Retirees Activities Office
30 SW/CVR
747 Nebraska Ave. Suite A-200
Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-6261
Official Business

**PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LOMPOC, CA
PERMIT NO. 97**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The Vandenberg Retired Activities Office currently maintains the mailing list for this newsletter in-house. It is based on input from the Air Force Personnel Center and the DEERS. However, input is also received directly from retirees and surviving spouses. Changes submitted directly to the RAO result in a more up-to-date mailing list. Please submit all corrections, changes of addresses, notice of deceased addressees etc. to the RAO as they occur. The mailing address of the RAO is near the address label above. You may also send e-mail to retirees.office@vandenberg.af.mil.