RETIREE TIMES

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

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Retiree Appreciation Day 2002

More than 500 retirees, spouses and widows attended Retiree Appreciation Day Nov. 13 at Vandenberg AFB. Speakers making presentations included (clockwise from lower left) Mozart Booker, Santa Barbara County Veterans Service Officer; Juanita Anderson, president of Central Coast Chapter 44 of the National Society of Military Widows; Pauline Triebenbacher, representing the TRICARE Management Agency; Retired Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Raymond J. Lischka, guest speaker; Col. Charles W. Campbell Jr., 30th Medical Group commander; retired Navy Capt. Cyril Buehler, Retiree Activities Office director and Master Sgt. Sheila Kaplan, Casualty Affairs officer. (RAO photos by John McGraw)

RAO Volunteer receives VOQ Award

By Cmdr. Earl F. Gustafson USN (Ret.)
Retiree Times Editor

A Retiree Activities Office volunteer was recognized as Civilian/Family Member Volunteer of the Quarter during the quarterly awards luncheon at the Pacific Coast Club Oct. 30. Retired Army Staff Sgt. George F. Tallent was nominated by retired Air Force Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney, former RAO project officer.

Tallent has been a key member of the volunteer staff at the RAO since early 2001. He drafts monthly public service announcements for monthly meetings of retirees and widows; and distributes them to local publications, radio stations and retiree community personnel. In addition, he has volunteered more than 60 hours per quarter fielding questions from retirees and widows visiting the RAO.

He is a decorated veteran of World War II. His decorations include five Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars for service in the European theatre.

Tallent has a long-standing connection with the local area having first arrived here in 1949. At that time, he was assigned to the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at what was then Army post Camp Cooke. Retiring from the Army in 1964, he returned to Lompoc and entered into employment with the U.S. Postal Service from which he retired a second time in 1984.

A 30-year member of the Lompoc Elks Lodge, Tallent has been named Elk of the Year. He has served on the Lodge's board of directors for five years and on its investigating committee for 27 years. His other Lodge activities include escorting veterans from a convalescent center to the Lodge for monthly luncheons.

Tallent is a member of the Lompoc Civil Defense Auxiliary Police patrolling on weekends and participating in crowd and traffic control. He has supported the Lompoc Flower Festival formore than r 20 years by supervising barbecue and food preparation crews.

For the past 17 years, Tallent has traveled to Northern California to assist in the annual Sonoma Bicycle Ride and Wine Festival benefiting the Special Olympics. He participates as a Christmas bell ringer for the Salvation Army. The Tri-Counties Blood Bank has benefited from his regular visits to the tune of more than 100 pints.

Tallent is a worthy recipient of the volunteer Award not only for his efforts on behalf of the retired military members and their surviving spouses but his volunteerism in the local community.

RAO Photo by John McGraw

Retired Army Staff Sgt. George F. Tallent (second from left) receives the Volunteer of the Quarter Award from Col. Charles W. Campbell, 30th Medical Group commander. Looking on are retired Navy Capt. Cyril Buehler, Retiree Activities Office Director and 30th Space Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Morey. The award was presented during the regular quarterly awards luncheon at the Pacific Coast Club Oct 30.

Director's Corner

Taking a different view of life

By Capt. Cyril Buehler, Supply Corps, USN (Ret.)
Retiree Activities Office Director

TRICARE, long-term care, concurrent receipt, social security and cost-of-living allowances are serious subjects and articles covering these subjects have been or will be carried on these pages. But there should also be time for lighter subjects or levity.

I have been involved in a classroom project with my 4th grade, 10-year-old grand niece, Kelly, in Ohio.

Each student in her class has created a paper doll. The boys call theirs Flat Sam and the girls call theirs Flat Samantha.

The object of the class project is for the students to send their dolls to people in far away places and, in turn, get reports back from where the dolls have been and what they've have seen.

Since my wife and I do a lot of traveling, Kelly asked us to take Flat Samantha with us and send periodic reports on her travels. So, in our travels and also our everyday living, I like to look at what goes on around us from the point of view of a 10-year-old. I then describe this in a letter from Flat Samantha to Kelly.

Contributed

Flat Samantha

That's when a different view of life kicks in.

In our everyday life as retirees, we have a tendency to see things without actually seeing them. On an airplane we settle back in our seats, watch the movie or just doze off. A 10-year-old looks out the window in awe as the world passes beneath the plane or sometimes sees lightning from storm clouds the pilot evades.

Visit the San Luis Obispo farmers market with the vendors, food stalls and street entertainers and imagine what a 10-year-old would see for the first time. Do the same with auto, train or ship travel, which incidentally, we just finished a cruise to the Bahamas. Flat Samantha was with us and we have pictures of her with tourist sights in the background.

Flat Samantha has gone everywhere with us. In her letters, Flat Samantha goes into detail describing all that she's seen and the places she's been.

Here I am in my seventies, trying to think like a 10-year-old. But the amusing thing is, it's not hard to do and life actually has a different perspective. Things we take for granted are now new adventures and great fun.

So my advice is this: If your life seems to be in an everyday rut, get yourself a paper doll, put yourself into the eyes of that doll and closely observe what goes on around you. You'll soon find that you're taking a different view of life. Guaranteed!

Free tax assistance is available

By Ann Fox
30th Space Wing Staff Judge Advocate's Office

With the start of the new year, the forms needed for filing income taxes will soon arrive. The Vandenberg tax team is here to help.

Representatives of the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board train volunteers on a variety of forms. Vandenberg has more than 55 volunteers with up to eight years of tax filing experience.

Following training, in early January, volunteers will be available to give complete tax service to include filing Federal and state income tax forms electronically. This gives the fastest possible refund.

There are always changes in the tax laws, but the knowledge and experience of the volunteers is top notch. Refunds are returned as quickly as possible, often in as little as ten days. Contact the tax office to schedule an appointment.

This service is provided FREE of charge to all active duty and retired military and their surviving spouses. To make an appointment, call Ann Fox at 605-3668.

Mail order pharmacy contract awarded

On Sept. 10, 2002, the Department of Defense TRICARE Management Activity announced the award of a contract to provide mail order TRICARE Program pharmacy services to Express Scripts Inc. of Maryland Heights, Mo. The contract covers a five-year period and is valued at approximately $275 million over the five years.

"The DoD learned from the past five-year contract about the benefits and services that are important to beneficiaries," said Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. "We have worked to improve benefits and have designed the next genera-

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RETIREE TIMES

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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>.

VA changes health care priority system

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi announced a decision to halt active solicitation of additional veterans to enroll in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. In a major policy shift, open access procedures with regard to priorities made possible with the passage of The Veterans' Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, Public Law No. 104-262, are also being modified. In 1998, the Clinton administration used authority under the Eligibility Reform Act to open VA clinics and hospitals to all veterans.

The Eligibility Reform Act amended Title 38, United States Code, to authorize the VA to provide needed inpatient hospital care and outpatient medical services to most veterans. That law also directed the VA to establish a national patient enrollment system to manage the provision of that care and services. The law directs VA to enroll veterans for care in accordance with priorities set forth in the statute, and requires that most veterans formally enroll with VA in order to receive care from VA.

It has been pointed out that the changes in eligibility criteria have expanded VA enrollment from approximately 2.9 million in 1995 to 4.4 million beneficiaries in 2002, while congressional funding has not kept pace. As a result, waiting times have increased, with veterans in some areas waiting six months or more for a primary care appointment. It is estimated that there may be more than 280,000 veterans on waiting lists for care.

Principi explained that his order to stop advertising for new enrollees does not mean that VA facilities will deny enrollment to any eligible veteran, but only that the VA would cease "aggressive marketing." Said Principi, "We have a serious situation, and it is irresponsible to proactively seek new enrollees when we are not confident we will provide them with timely, quality care."

Perhaps more significantly, Principi stated his intent to change the rules governing scheduling for VA health care. Currently, veterans are divided into one of seven categories (based on level of disability), but the VA gives members in all categories the same priority for either primary care or specialty care appointments. Recent increases in enrollment of nondisabled veterans have increased waiting times for the disabled veterans who are supposed to be the VA's primary customers.

Principi's planned changes will give higher scheduling priority to those veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or greater and to those seeking care for a service-connected condition. "Never again on my watch will a combat-disabled veteran be told that he or she is no different than any other veteran," said Principi. "These veterans are the very reason we exist, and our every action should focus first on their needs."

The change was approved Aug. 9, 2002 and published in the Federal Register Sept 17, 2002 (Volume 67, Number 180). Section 17.49 of 38 CFR is revised to read as follows:

Priorities for Outpatient Medical Services and Inpatient Hospital Care.

In scheduling appointments for outpatient medical services and admissions for inpatient hospital care, the Under Secretary for Health shall give priority to:

(a) Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or greater based on one or more disabilities or unemployability; and

(b) Veterans needing care for a service-connected disability.

(Source: VA News Release)

Retiree dental contract renewed

On Dec. 3, 2002, the Department of Defense TRICARE Management Activity announced the award of a contract to provide services for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program to Delta Dental Plan of California, located in San Francisco, Calif. The contract covers a five-year period and is valued at approximately $987 million.

The new dental contract will begin on May 1, 2003, and will continue to provide a voluntary enrollee-funded dental plan to uniformed service retirees and their family members, certain surviving members of deceased active duty sponsors and to Medal of Honor recipients and their immediate family members and survivors.

The plan will offer dental coverage throughout the United States, its territories and Canada. All premiums are paid by the enrollee and vary depending on where the enrollee lives. Beneficiaries may find more information on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil or by visiting the Delta Dental Plan of California Web site at www.ddpdelta.com. (Source: TRICARE New Release)

A Prisoner of War remembers

By Bob Behme
Freelance Writer

One terrible and uncertain year spent as a prisoner of war in Germany has given Vernon Siebert memories enough to last a lifetime. On Sept. 20, POWs and those missing in action will be recognized nationally by Presidential proclamation.

Siebert is one of them.

Now a Nipomo resident removed from war by 58 years, Vernon Siebert was then a private first class in the famed Blue Devils, a part of the 351st Infantry. In 1944, he was in one of the first groups to hit the Italian front, Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, 88th Division.

It was Siebert's first taste of war.

Part of a communications team, he quickly came under heavy shelling. As Siebert hit the ground, a shell struck beside his foot, but did not explode. Marking the spot, he returned with members of a disposal team who dismantled the bomb. Inside was a note that read: "Compliments of the French underground." Sabotage had saved Siebert's foot and possibly his life.

A few days later, near a town named Santa Maria, Siebert and other men from Company E were laying wire to an artillery outpost. It was a fierce battle; only 49 men survived from an original 200. The survivors were moving cautiously toward a farmhouse when Germans appeared, using American prisoners as a shield.

The American officer had no choice, he could shoot fellow soldiers or surrender. Company E surrendered. On May 12, 1944, Siebert's life as a prisoner began. "It's a part of my life I don't like to think about," he said.

He was taken to Florence, placed in a boxcar and transported to a POW camp at Moosburg, Germany, near Munich, receiving no food and little water on the trip. Siebert was given the POW number 132296 and placed in Stalag 7A. His diet was meager - water soup, potatoes and ersatz coffee occasionally livened by small pieces of bread and cheese.

RAO Photo by John McGraw

Army retiree Vernon Siebert at the Retired Activities Office with some of his fellow retirees.

Prisoners were forced to fill bomb craters in Munich streets and labored at it daily. With too little food and too much work, Siebert came down with jaundice and dysentery.

Unable to work he was sent by rail to Oflag 64, an officer's POW camp near Schubin, Poland. He was put to work as an officer's orderly. His food rations increased, life improved and for the first time Siebert thought he might survive until the war ended.

In February 1945, Russians were advancing and Siebert and other prisoners were forced to march toward Hammerstein, a town on the German coast.

In freezing temperatures, battered by snow, with inadequate clothing, the ragged group moved slowly, pushing a cart with their supplies inside. Several men died. Siebert's feet froze, his hands and arms stiffened until he was unable to move. He expected to be killed.

Instead, he was thrown onto the cart and eventually transported to Stalag 3A, a camp near Potsdam. There, on April 27, 1945, Russians liberated his camp. A few days later, a special American service truck picked up the men and took them to Berlin.

His days as a POW were over.

During his time in the various stalags, Siebert saw prisoners pistol-whipped and killed but was himself neither mistreated nor interrogated. He was kept on a starvation diet. A sturdy six-footer weighing 190 when he enlisted, his weight had dropped to 130 pounds by the time he was released.

While waiting in Paris to be shipped home, he had an unexpected and exciting moment. An exuberant GI threw live ammunition into an evening campfire and exploding bullets sprayed the camp. Siebert took one in the leg. After a stay in the Veterans Hospital in Miami, he was discharged in November 1945.

Born in Chicago, Siebert returned to the Windy City after the war. He became an auto mechanic, then worked for a local Pontiac dealership as a service manager. He and his wife, Edith, moved to the San Fernando Valley in the '60s, where he accepted a similar position. Later, he worked for CBS building scenery.

The couple moved to Nipomo in 1996. His wife served as a private first class in the Army Air Force. A brother, William Siebert, also served in the army. William died in Germany during one of the last battles of the war. Now 79, Siebert is still haunted by wounds caused by war.

(Reprinted with permission of Emily Slater, editor of the Adobe Press. Freelance writer Bob Behme can be contacted through the Adobe Press at (805) 489-4206.)

AFOSI to inform retirees on Eagle Eyes

Special Agent Steve Houghton, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Detachment 804 will speak with retirees about Eagle Eyes, one of the latest Air Force antiterrorism initiatives. The meeting will take place Mar. 21 at the Retiree Activities Center during the regular quarterly potluck meeting.

AFOSI always seeks information of suspicious, out-of-the-ordinary occurrences that may indicate force-protection threats to Air Force people and resources. The need for such information – and its timely conveyance to the proper authorities – was amplified by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

To improve the timely collection and conveyance of pertinent information, AFOSI has established the Eagle Eyes program, which aims to collect information about suspicious activity from any and all members of the Total Force (and even off-base citizens) and then quickly pass that information to appropriate decision makers for assessment and action.

Naturally, the "output" end of the program (the conveyance of threat information) will only be as good as the quality and quantity received at the "input" end. In other words, for Eagle Eyes to be effective, people must recognize and report behaviors that may indicate force-protection threats.

The objectives of the Eagle Eyes program are twofold: 1) to educate people on the types of activities that should arouse suspicion, and 2) to teach them what to do when such activities are observed.

Categories of suspicious activities

- **Surveillance:** Someone recording or monitoring activities. This may include the use of cameras (either still or video), note taking, drawing diagrams, annotating on maps, or using binoculars amd other vision-enhancing devices.

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Dog tags from Vietnam

Two Florida businessmen, Rob Stiff, the owner of Magic Makers, Inc., and Jim Gain, the co-owner of a PMG Worldwide freight company, went to Asia on a business trip. Scouting the commercial climate in Vietnam, they came across U.S. servicemen's dog tags in a back-alley market in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. They were being sold for six or seven for a dollar. Four months later they returned to buy the tags. The two men are now trying to get the dog tags to the servicemen's families.

Approximately 620 were brought back. About 400 of the 620 are quite legible. They bought as many as they thought were authentic after browsing through thousands of dog tags, mostly fake and otherwise. Back in America, they compared the dog tags retrieved from Vietnam to the names on the War's Memorial wall. Many of them matched up

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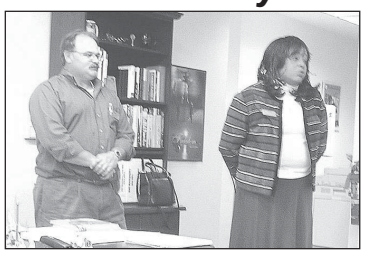
At the monthly meetings ...



RAO photo by John McGraw

Programs director Mike Renner and Leisure Travel director Edwina Williams from the 30th Services Squadron speak with retirees and spouses at the October meeting. They described the wide range of services available at Vandenberg including economical tours and discounted admissions to various attractions throughout California

RAO photo by John McGraw

Diabetes was the topic of the October meeting of the National Society of Military Widows, Central Coast Chapter 44. Air Force Reserve Maj. Michele Williams from the Vandenberg Pharmacy provides information and answers questions on the subject.

Navy/Marine Corps WWII POW Back Pay

The Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of 2001 directed the Department of the Navy to pay back-pay to persons interned during World War II who were selected for promotion but not available to accept the promotion. The bill authorizes payment to the former member or the surviving spouse of the deceased former member.

Only the service member or surviving spouse is entitled to the back-pay. If the former member or surviving spouse are no longer living, by law no claim will be paid. Only Navy and Marine Corps POW's during World War II, Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946, are eligible.

A printable application for the WWII Prisoner of War Back-Pay Program can be downloaded by visiting the website http://www.persnet.navy.mil/pers62/WWIIPOW/Application.pdf. Application forms are also available at the Retired Activities Office.

Navy POW applications should be sent to:
Navy Personnel Command
PERS-62W
5720 Integrity Drive,
Millington, TN 38055-6210

Marine POW applications should be sent to:
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
2 Navy Annex, RFL-F7,
Washington, DC 20380-1775

Marine Corps queries can be made toll free to 1-866-472-7139.

The law specifically states that back-pay will be determined using the amount the member would have been paid. This calculation is at the World War II pay rates and is not adjusted for inflation.

The process of determining promotion eligibility and the computation of the amount to be paid will require individually researching each request, including obtaining and reviewing the member's archived personnel and pay records. This process will take time so please be patient.

Provide what information you have available from your personal files. It is requested that you do not request information from the National Personnel Records Center to complete your application. These will only delay processing your application since it could impact the availability of your personnel record when the Navy tries to locate it for verification.

At this time, the exact number of applicants and the application volume expected is unknown. This will greatly effect the processing time of applications. Updates will be provided concerning the process and the estimated processing times in the near future. (Source: NavPers)

Burial at sea offered by USCG

The U.S. Coast Guard will scatter the ashes of any cremated U.S. citizen at sea (at least 3 nautical miles from land) as requested whenever operationally possible. This is a free service.

A person cannot request a burial at sea from the Coast Guard prior to death. The request must be made by the person authorized to dispose of the remains (usually the next of kin). Anyone who thinks he/she would like to be buried at sea should make sure the next of kin is aware of the desire and may want to have the desire recorded in a will.

To request burial at sea, the next of kin should submit a letter to:

Commanding Officer
Integrated Support
Command Alameda
Coast Guard Island,
Bldg. 21
Alameda, CA 94501

The letter should say that, as the person authorized to dispose of the remains, you request to have ___'s ashes scattered at sea. Please include any other requests you may have, such as a preferred location off the California coastline, type of cutter, if you want the burial recorded on videotape, or if you and other family members would like to be present.

Burials at sea are to be at no cost to the government, so the burial will need to occur during a routine patrol. Since patrols are often overnight, it may not be possible for family members to be present. However, if it is possible to meet any requests, the Coast Guard will do so, so please feel free to request whatever you would like.

Once the Coast Guard has the letter, you should expect a response within a month. You will be given a cutter location where you will need to bring the following:

- The cremated remains.
- A "transit or burial permit," which should be available from the funeral service who conducted the cremation.
- A copy of your original letter request.
- A copy of the approval letter from the Coast Guard.

Any other special items you would like used in the burial such as a videotape to record the burial, or a wreath or flower petals if you would like these items scattered with the ashes. Anything you want placed in the water will need to be decomposable—no plastic.

It is recommended you include a copy of the obituary with these other items if no family members will be present. This is strictly for the information of the crew on the cutter conducting the burial—it makes the burial more personal.

Once the burial is complete, you will receive documentation giving the date and time of the ceremony along with the location of the burial in longitude/latitude. Please feel free to contact Ensign Don Isom at 510-437-5846 with the Coast Guard if you have other questions or problems. (Source: ISC Alameda)

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perfectly. Even the service numbers are matching the names on the wall.

Although most of the servicemen were killed during the conflict, Stiff and Gain have found some veterans that are still alive. The Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, has assisted in trying to locate more families.

If you believe there is the possibility that dog tags lost in Vietnam by you, or belonging to somebody who was a casualty, may be included in this lot, visit website www.founddogtags.com. Names are listed on the site. You can contact Stiff and Gain via email and help in the return of the dog tags. (Source: dcmilitary.com/cnn.com/FRA)

Vehicle decal renewal

It is time to renew 2002 Vandenberg vehicle decals. Bring current registration, military identification and insurance certificate to Pass and Registration. Call 606-1853 for more information.

At the holiday potluck ...

RAO photo by John McGraw

The Silvertones, a chorale group from Santa Maria, makes their annual visit to the Retiree Activities Office. With Mary Louise Oswald at the keyboard conducting, they joined with the audience in singing holiday tunes.

RAO photo by John McGraw

Lucky winners of the door prize drawing were (from left) Margaret Lundin, Norris Esterling and Esther DeGregario. In back is Capt. Cyril Buehler, Retiree Activities Office director.

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- **Elicitation:** People or organizations attempting to gain information about military operations, capabilities, or people. Elicitation attempts may be made by mail, fax, telephone, or in person.
- **Tests of security:** Any attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures in order to assess strengths and weaknesses.
- **Acquiring supplies:** Purchasing or stealing explosives, weapons, ammunition, etc. Also includes acquiring military uniforms, decals, flight manuals, passes or badges (or the equipment to manufacture such items) or any other controlled items.
- **Suspicious persons out of place:** People who don't seem to belong in the workplace, neighborhood, business establishment, or anywhere else. Includes suspicious border crossings and stowaways aboard ships or people jumping ship in port.
- **Dry run:** Putting people into position and moving them around according to their plan without actually committing the terrorist act. This is especially true when planning a kidnapping, but it can also pertain to bombings. An element of this activity could also include mapping out routes and determining the timing of traffic lights and flow.
- **Deploying assets:** People and supplies getting into position to commit the act. This is a person's last chance to alert authorities before the terrorist act occurs.

(Source: AFOSI)

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tion of TRICARE contracts, including the mail order pharmacy contract, to build on constantly increasing levels of excellence in performance and value. It is our goal, as well as our commitment to our beneficiaries, to ensure they have the best health care available, and we believe this contract will help us meet this goal."

The new TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy contract will replace the existing National Mail Order Pharmacy contract, which is due to expire at the end of February 2003. The TMOP contract will provide a worldwide, full-service mail order pharmacy program to all TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries and will begin on or about Mar. 1, 2003.

Like the NMOP, the TMOP provides another option for TRICARE beneficiaries to meet their prescription needs in addition to military and retail pharmacies. All three options for pharmacy services will be monitored by the Pharmacy Data Transaction Service, a patient medication record that enhances patient safety. "The military health system continues to be a leader in quality, convenience and safety in providing pharmacy services," said Army Col. Bill Davies, director, DoD pharmacy programs.

More information about the new TMOP program will be available soon on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil. Beneficiaries currently using NMOP will receive information about TMOP prior to its start date. Beneficiaries also may visit the Express Scripts Inc. Web site at http://www.express-scripts.com/ for more information. (Source: TRICARE News Release)

VA priority groups listed

Once you apply for enrollment, the Department of Veterans Affairs will be verify your specific eligibility status and assign you to a priority group. The priority groups are as follows, ranging from 1-7 with 1 being the highest priority for enrollment. The same services are generally available to all enrolled veterans.

Priority Group 1
Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or more

Priority Group 2
Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30 or 40 percent

Priority Group 3
Veterans who are former POWs
Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10 or 20 percent
Veterans discharged from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
Veterans who received the Purple Heart
Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38 U.S.Code, Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

Priority Group 4
Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits.
Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5
Non-service-connected veterans and non-compensable service-connected veterans rated 0 percent disabled, whose annual income and net worth are below the established dollar thresholds

Priority Group 6
All other eligible veterans who are not required to make co-payments for their care, including:
World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
Veterans seeking care solely for disorders associated with: exposure to herbicides while serving in Vietnam; or exposure to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and

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Mark your calendars!

Retiree Activities Center

There will be no **third Thursday** of month meeting in the Retiree Activities Center during January and February. Meetings will resume with a potluck luncheon Mar. 20 beginning at 12 noon followed by a guest speaker at 1 p.m. The site is Building 10364 – Base Exchange area, across from the Home & Garden Shop where retirees, spouses and widows gather to hear guest speakers, socialize and enjoy cookies and coffee. The schedule is as follows:

Mar. 20 – AFOSI on Eagle Eye Program.
***Nov.** -- Retiree Appreciation Day, To be announced
***Dec. 11– Thursday – HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON**
*Denotes different date than third Thursday of the month and for Appreciation Day different location.

NOTE: Speakers are subject to change. Please check the *Space & Missile Times* for details as days come closer. Also, listen to KUHL Tuesdays at 8:20 a.m. for current news on events; and watch for flyers posted at the Retiree Activities Center.

Society of Military Widows

The SMW, Central Coast Chapter 44, meets the second Wednesday of each month in the Retiree Activities Center. The ladies have a **business meeting** that begins **at 1 p.m.;** usually, followed by a **guest speaker at 2 p.m.** The retirees and spouses frequently attend the informative lecture sessions. **Military widows, retirees and spouses are invited.**

Tickets, Tours, Cruises

Vandenberg Leisure Tours is in Building 10122, the Services Center, located near the corner of California Boulevard and Washington Avenue. 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 website at www.vandenberg-leisure-tours.org. For complete information on the following upcoming trips, contact the tour office.

Jan. 24-Feb. 7	Hawaii Cruise, $1,549 to $2,099
Feb. 10-14	Ensenada, Catalina Cruise, $356/$406 per person sharing
Feb. 15-18	Lake Tahoe, $140 per person sharing
Feb. 20-26	London Special, $1,179 per person sharing, single add $300
Feb. 23-Mar. 1	Mississippi River Cruise & New Orleans, $1,650 to $1,850
Mar. 9-12	Las Vegas, $145 per person sharing
Mar. 19-21	Palm Springs, $224 per person sharing
Apr. 5	Bowers Museum, Nixon Library, $35 transporta tion only
Apr. 12 or 20	Cats, orchestra seating, $105
Apr 12-15 or 20-23	Laughlin, $84 sharing, $114 single
May 3	Monterey, $35
May 6-17	Great Lakes Adventure, $1,999 per person double, single add $650
Jun. 5 and 19	The Producers, $105
Jun. 17-26	Canadian Rockies, $1,685 per person sharing, single add $400
Jul. 3-6	Laughlin, $145 per person sharing
Jul. 17	The Producers, $105
Jul. 20-25	Mammoth Mountain, $385 per person sharing
Aug. 1-15	Rhine River and Switzerland, call

Retiree Times address corrections

The mailing list for this newsletter is maintained by the Retiree Activities Office based on input from the Defense Manpower Data Center and other sources as well as input directly from addressees. Please make any corrections necessary on the label below, clip and return to the RAO. In the event the retiree is deceased, indicate date and given name of surviving spouse. We want to continue to send the newsletter to the widow/widower. The mailing address of the RAO is shown below. You may also send e-mail to: retirees.office@vandenberg.af.mil.

DeCA announces scholarships

The Defense Commissary Agency and the Fisher House Foundation are teaming up to sponsor their 2003 Scholarships for Military Children Program. All dependent unmarried children (under the age of 23) of retired military, active duty, Reserve and Guard personnel are eligible to apply for one of the $1,500 scholarships.

Applications can be downloaded from http://www.commissaries.com or http://www.fisherhouse.org and will also be available at any commissary. The deadline for returning applications, by hand or mail, to a commissary is Feb 21, 2003. Applicants must be planning to attend, or already be enrolled in, an accredited college or university as a full-time student for the fall term of 2003.

Students attending a community or junior college must be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the DEERS database and that they have a current ID card. All applicants must be citizens of the United States.

(Source: FRA)

VA from Page 6

Nagasaki; or for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War; or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998 compensable percent service-connected veterans

Priority Group 7
Non-service-connected veterans and non-compensable 0 percent service-connected veterans with income and net worth above the established dollar thresholds and who agree to pay specified co-payments

(Source: VA)

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Closed Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Federal Holidays
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