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Hangar Flying Newsletter

A Publication of the JBLM McChord Field Retiree Activities Office for Air Force Retirees, their spouses and survivors. Department of the Air Force, 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, Customer Service Mall Rm 1001, JBLM McChord Field WA 98438-1114; Phone (253) 982-3214 (Voice Mail 24 hours a day) Fax 253-982-5234. Email – retaffairs@us.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

BEWARE Fraudulent SmartDocs! Several *myPay* customers have informed DFAS that fraudulent SmartDocs email messages are being sent that could put your information and finances at risk.

The reported invalid emails contain what appears to be from a valid SmartDocs email address. The originators of these emails have “**spoofed**” their messages to hide their true origin and placed the SmartDocs address in the “From” line to make the email appear legitimate.

Valid SmartDocs messages from DFAS are **always sent in plain text, do not include attachments and do not ask you to send any information in response.** Your email program may automatically convert a valid SmartDocs message into HTML and convert some text into clickable links. DFAS recommends that you **do NOT click** on any links within any email message. To access a site referenced in an email, open your browser and type the link (URL) directly into the browser.

Don’t get fooled. If you receive a SmartDocs message that contains a link, don’t click on it. If a URL is listed in the message type it in manually within your browser. Delete unexpected or unsolicited messages that contain attachments or that request you to send information back.

Becoming a victim is easy. Utilizing a few basic precautions with email handling are critical to protecting your information, finances and identity. Find other ways to keep [yourself safe online](#). (Source DFAS.mil)

VA Secretary Provides Relief for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries:

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald has granted equitable relief to more than 24,000 Veterans following a national review of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) medical examinations conducted in connection with disability compensation claims processed between 2007 and 2015.

This action by the Secretary allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to offer new TBI examinations to Veterans whose initial examination for TBI was not conducted by one of four designated medical specialists and provides them with the opportunity to have their claims reprocessed. Equitable relief is a unique legal remedy that allows the Secretary to correct an injustice to a claimant where VA is not otherwise authorized to do so within the scope of the law.

“Traumatic Brain Injury is a signature injury in Veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and VA is proud to be an organization that sets the bar high for supporting these, and all, Veterans,” said Secretary McDonald. “Providing support for Veterans suffering from a TBI is a priority and a privilege, and we must make certain they receive a just and fair rating for their disabilities.” (Continued on the next page)

To ensure that TBI is properly evaluated for disability compensation purposes, VA developed a policy in 2007 requiring that one of four specialists – a psychiatrist, physiatrist, neurosurgeon or neurologist – complete TBI exams when VA does not have a prior diagnosis.

Since 2007, medicine around TBI has been a rapidly evolving science. VA designated particular specialists to conduct initial TBI exams because they have the most experience with the symptoms and effects of TBI. As more research became available, VA issued a number of guidance documents that may have created confusion regarding the policy. VA has confirmed that its TBI policy guidance is now clear and being followed.

“We let these Veterans down,” Secretary McDonald said. “That is why we are taking every step necessary to grant equitable relief to those affected to ensure they receive the full benefits to which they are entitled.”

VA understands the importance of an accurate exam to support Veterans’ disability claims. The Secretary’s decision to grant relief will enable VA to take action on any new examinations without requiring Veterans to submit new claims. If additional benefits are due, VA will award an effective date as early as the date of the initial TBI claim.

VA will contact Veterans identified as part of this national TBI review to offer them an opportunity to receive a new examination and have their claims reprocessed. More than 13,000 of these affected Veterans are already receiving service-connected compensation benefits for TBI at a 10-percent disability evaluation or higher, which means that the diagnosis has already been established. (Source: Department of Veterans Affairs)

VA Announces Telemental Health Clinical Resource Centers: As the Department of Veterans Affairs works to improve Veterans access to health care, its telehealth services play an integral role in that process, said Dr. David J. Shulkin, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. Dr. Shulkin spoke today to members of the American Telemedicine Association attending the group’s 2016 conference in Minneapolis, where he also announced the establishment of five VA Mental Health Telehealth Clinical Resource Centers to provide enhanced mental health access and services to Veterans in remote locations.

VA’s Mental Health Telemedicine Clinical Resource Centers will provide Veterans, particularly those living in rural areas, with rapid access to mental health services where local barriers exist. This expanded effort will help close the gap in access to mental health care, in particular, in those traditionally underserved communities.

“We are in the midst of the largest transformation in the history of VA with MyVA, which means we are reorienting what we do around the needs of our Veterans and providing care when, how and where they want to receive that care”, said Dr. Shulkin. These mental health telehealth resource centers will provide our Veterans in underserved areas the expert mental health providers they may not otherwise be able to obtain locally. We know that we are doing more in telehealth than any other healthcare system and connecting mental health providers to areas hard to recruit and retain.

The Mental Health Telehealth Clinical Resource Centers will be located in Charleston, SC.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Pittsburgh, PA; and a consortium of facilities in Boise, ID; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR. The fifth facility, already operational in West Haven, Conn., is a specialty hub focused on the most severe and complex mental health issues, such as chronic depression and bipolar disorder. The others are expected to be available in the summer, with the priority given to VA medical facilities in urgent need of additional mental health providers. (Source Veterans AFFAIRS VA News Releases)

VA Announced Formal Removal of Three Phoenix Health Care System

Officials : The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it has removed three senior officials at the Phoenix VA Health Care System. The move follows an announcement in March in which VA proposed the removal of Lance Robinson, the facility's Associate Director; Brad Curry, Chief of Health Administration Service; and Dr. Darren Deering, Chief of Staff. In addition to other causes, the three were removed for negligent performance of duties and failure to provide effective oversight for not ensuring Veterans were either properly scheduled for appointments or placed on an appropriate wait list. (*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs*)

The Pentagon has Proposed Major Retiree Healthcare Changes: The 2017 Pentagon budget request has many new healthcare proposals for the entire military healthcare care system, several will affect all retirees. Including:

- Mandatory enrollment windows, miss a window and you lose your coverage.
- \$900 annual enrollment for Tricare Standard.
- \$4000 catastrophic caps for Standard.
- \$700 enrollment fee for Tricare Prime.
- Enrollment Fees for Tricare for Life.
- Prime visits restricted to MTF's.
- Increased prescriptions cost.
- Increased co-pays.

For working age retirees;

- Annual enrollment fees (participation Fees) increasing to \$700 per family.
- Care will only be provided at an MTF.
- Co-pays for in network emergency room \$75.

Tricare Choice:

- Participation fees of \$900.
- Catastrophic cap \$4000.
- Co-pays \$20 for primary care at a network provider. \$25 for a non-network provider and \$90 for emergency care.

Working-age retirees will have to enroll during an annual enrollment window and pay the participation fee for either plan or forfeit coverage for the entire year.

Military Retirees 65+:

Tricare for Life will remain a secondary payer to Medicare Part B however beneficiaries will pay the following fees.

- Users would begin paying an enrollment fee on 0.5 percent of gross retired pay.
- By 2021 TFL enrollees will pay a fee of 2 percent gross retired pay.

Pharmacy Fees:

- 30 day supply of generics at a retail pharmacy will increase to \$14
- 30 day supply of name brands at a retail pharmacy will increase to \$46
- 90 day supplies filled through the mail order pharmacy generics \$20, brand name to \$46 and non-formulary to \$92

VA Proposes to Grant Full Practice Authority to Advanced Practice

Registered Nurses: The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing a rule to grant full practice authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses when they are acting within the scope of their VA employment. Full practice authority will help optimize access to VA health care by permitting APRNs to assess, diagnose, prescribe medications, and interpret diagnostic tests. This action proposes to expand the pool of qualified health care professionals authorized to provide primary health care and other related health care services to the full extent of their education, training, and certification to Veterans without the clinical supervision of a physician.

Casualty Assistance from the CAR

Hello Everyone

I want to introduce myself as the new Air Force Casualty person at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. My name is John Currie and I PCS'd here recently from Altus AFB, OK. My contact phone number is (253) 982-3891. I am located in Bldg 100, Room 1014 and my customer service hours are from 0730 to 1630 Monday thru Thursday. Although I am new to the JBLM area I have worked in the casualty arena for many years.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that I appreciate the great work that our Retiree Activities Office here does in getting the word out to our retirees through venues like this newsletter. It makes my job much easier. It is very important that we all (I'm an Air Force retiree too) stay informed about changes in programs that affect us. With the approval of your Retiree Affairs Office leadership I plan on doing an article for this newsletter on a continuous basis.

There is one particular topic that I would like to touch upon today and that is the need for all retirees to have a personal documents file. This document file should contain (at a minimum) copies of; all DD Forms 214, VA disability rating sheets, marriage and divorce documents from both the retiree and spouse, wills, insurance policies, as well as information regarding burial preferences and medical records.

Here's a few reasons why:

- The VA has a survivor annuity program called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). This program pays \$1254.00 a month (extra amounts are sometime payable) to surviving spouses in cases where the VA determines the veterans death is service connected. When we apply for this benefit there are documents that should be sent with it, this includes; the death certificate, current marriage certificate, proof of termination (divorce decrees/death certificates) of all prior marriages (of retiree and spouse), all DD Forms 214, any previous VA rating sheets, and pertinent medical records to support the claim. Just because you're not currently receiving disability from the VA doesn't mean you shouldn't have this document file. Veterans who were in Vietnam had no idea that years later they or their spouses would be able to file claims for "Agent Orange".
- Some surviving spouses have no idea if their spouse has life insurance, I have no doubt that some life insurance goes unclaimed simply because the spouse doesn't know there is any. That should not happen and is far less likely to happen if all this type of information is stored in one central location and our survivors know where that location is.

Stroke strikes fast. You should too: Learn the signs of stroke and how you can take steps to prevent it. You can have high blood pressure or hypertension, and still feel just fine. High blood pressure is common in older people and, if not controlled, can lead to serious health problems, like stroke. A stroke is a blood clot or broken blood vessel in your brain.

Have your blood pressure checked regularly. If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, talk to your doctor about managing your blood pressure to lower your risk of stroke.

Be prepared! Learn the signs of stroke

- * Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg—especially on one side of the body
- * Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding
- * Sudden problems seeing in one eye or both eyes
- * Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, or trouble walking
- * Sudden severe headache with no known cause

DON'T IGNORE THE SIGNS OF STROKE! Call 911 right away if you see or feel any symptoms.

Everyone should know the stroke warning signs. Forward this to your friends and relatives—you could save a life. (*SOURCE: TRICARE For Life*)

Eligibility for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program includes "gray area"

retirees. The Enhanced TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is available to all military retirees (including gray area retirees) and their eligible family members, un-remarried surviving spouses and their eligible children, as well as MOH recipients and their eligible immediate family members. The program covers cleanings, exams, fillings, root canals, gum surgery, oral surgery and dental accidents on the first day that coverage becomes effective; after 12 months of being in the program, it then covers crowns, bridges, partials, braces and dental implants. (New retirees who enroll within four months after retirement from the Uniformed Services or transfer to Retired Reserve status are eligible to waive the 12-month waiting period for major services; supporting documentation is required)

The Enhanced TRDP provides every enrollee an annual maximum of \$1,300 per person, a \$1200 annual maximum for dental accidents and a \$1750 lifetime maximum for orthodontics. (*Continued on the next page*)

It is important to note that the money that the TRDP pays out for preventive and diagnostic services doesn't count against the annual maximum - those benefits are in addition to the \$1300. Retirees can find more information on the program, as well as enroll 24/7/365, online by visiting trdp.org <http://trdp.org> TRDP enrollees realize the maximum program savings (an average of 22%) when seeing a network provider. To find a network provider, as well as utilize the Consumer Toolkit to view processed claims, see annual maximum information, sign up to receive paperless EOBs and more, please visit trdp.org <http://trdp.org>. You can also obtain more information by contacting Doug Schobel at Dschobel@delta.org <mailto:Dschobel@delta.org>. (*SOURCE: TRDP Press Release, 13 May 2016*)

TORREJÓN AIR BASE, SPAIN 15TH BI-ANNUAL REUNION

The 15th Bi-Annual Torrejón Air Base, Spain Reunion will be held in Los Angeles, CA September 1-5, 2016. Thanks again to Ervin and Carol Perry for hosting the wonderful 14th reunion in Florence, KY. We are looking forward to another great reunion with lots of fun and socializing with our many families and friends who were stationed at TAB. All are welcomed to attend.

HOTEL: The hotel is The Concourse Hotel at Los Angeles International Airport, a HYATT-affiliated hotel, at 6225 W. Century Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Group rates are \$139.00 single and \$149.00 double, all with full daily breakfast included. These rates are good three days before events and three days after. Please take advantage of the extra days to enjoy many other places to go around Los Angeles area. Make hotel reservations on or before August 8, 2016, by calling The Concourse Hotel at 1-888-421-1442 toll free or 1-402-592-6464 and refer to "The Torrejón Air Base Spain Reunion."

TRANSPORTATION: Free LAX Airport shuttle, 24 hours, every 20 minutes. Discounted self-parking is \$12.00 daily.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED: Thursday, September 1 – 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Meet & Greet

Friday, September 2 – 12:00 p.m. Los Angeles Air Force Base Lunch Picnic/Shopping

Saturday, September 3 – 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. City Bus Tour/Los Angeles Garment District/ Hollywood

Sunday, September 4

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Breakfast/Worship - 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Banquet/Dance

Monday, September 5 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast & Farewell to Those Leaving

While at Los Angeles AFB, we will be next to the Tickets & Tours Office where you will be able to purchase discounted tickets to many places you would like to go. The phone number there is 1-310-653-1304.

REGISTRATION: Cost for all reunion events per person is \$240.00 and includes T-shirt and cap. Please send your T-shirt size along with your payment made out to "Torrejón AB Spain 2016 Reunion" before August 8, 2016, and mail to Burnethel Sanford, P.O. Box 3492, Riverside, CA 92519.

The TAB Reunion is always every two years during the Labor Day weekend. Before we leave the reunion we ask for volunteers to host the next one. If there is more than one volunteer we will have a drawing to select one. Please consider hosting the next reunion and submit your name at the reunion. You must be present to volunteer. It will be greatly appreciated. This gives everyone a two-year notice for the next reunion's location!

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact us with any questions! We look forward to seeing you in sunny Southern California!

Torrejón Air Base, Spain Reunions:
Burnethel Sanford, National Chairperson
mizbs3492@msn.com Phone (951) 739-0202

Mattie Grant, Founder
Ezlivngran@aol.com
(951) 323-2185

Volunteers Welcomed!!! Volunteering is a rewarding experience. There are many programs and activities within the military community that could not exist if it were not for the many volunteers doing the work to make things happen. **Be a Volunteer at the RAO**, if you have been looking for a fun, a creative and rewarding way to stay involved in the McChord Military Retiree community, then volunteering is the answer. At the McChord Retiree Activities Office, you can easily join our volunteer staff. Hands on training will be provided and you will be working with a great team of volunteers who are military retirees and spouses providing their time, skills, talents and wisdom towards helping the military community. For more information you can contact us at 253-982-3214. **There are many opportunities for volunteers**, if you are a retired aircraft mechanic the McChord Heritage Museum can use your help restoring and maintain the museum's heritage aircraft, contact Mr. Jordon at 253-982-2485. The USO, the Red Cross, the base clinic and the American Lake VA Hospital also need volunteers.

HELPFUL LINKS

To find your state representative:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

To find your state senators:

<http://www.senate.gov>

To find the VA:

<http://www.va.gov>

To find DFAS:

<http://www.dfas.mil>

To find Tricare:

<http://www.tricare.mil>

To schedule appointment to renew ID Card

<https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>

Link to Retiree Publications

Army Echoes:

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Shift Colors:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner:

www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:

www.usmc-mccs.org

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

List of businesses who give military discounts

<http://www.rather-be-shopping.com/blog/2014/05/29/veteran-military-discounts/>

VA benefits book available

The Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors handbook is available – with 18 pages of new information. The book can be found at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2014_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans_English.pdf.

Veterans Crisis Hotline

1-800-273-8255 press 1

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thank you for your support of the Hangar Flyer newsletter. If you have questions about anything pertaining to military retiree benefits and services, email us at; retaffairs@us.af.mil or call us at the RAO. Hours are 9 to 12 Monday through Friday. After 12 please leave a message and we will call you back. The phone number is 253-982-3214

Thank you, Editor