



Still Serving in Korea



Newsletter 2001-1

The newsletter for U.S. military retirees in the Republic of Korea

Jan-Mar 2001

Medical Care Matters

TRICARE Benefit for Overseas Retirees

Medicare-eligible military beneficiaries become eligible for TRICARE medical benefits effective October 1, 2001. The law requires that all Medicare-eligible beneficiaries, regardless of age, must be enrolled in Medicare Part B to receive TRICARE benefits.

Currently, over-65 military retirees living in overseas locations have only two options for medical coverage: seek space available medical care from the nearest US military medical facility, or sign up for civilian insurance coverage. If these same individuals lived in the US, they would also be able to seek medical coverage under Medicare Parts A & B. However, Medicare will not pay for services received outside the US.

In overseas locations, under-65 retirees are currently covered by TRICARE Standard. On October 1, 2001, the Standard benefit will extend to over-65 eligibles, continuing their current under-65 coverage indefinitely. The only requirement is that they enroll in Medicare Part B, which, although it does not cover care received in overseas locations, will cover medical care sought in the US. Since enrollment in Medicare Part B is a requirement for coverage in the states, where TRICARE is the second payer after Medicare on any medical claims, Medicare Part

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Still Serving in Korea is published quarterly by the Osan Air Base Retiree Activities Office to inform retirees and family members on information of interest on rights, benefits and privileges, and on the status of legislative initiatives which affect military retirees and beneficiaries. Items in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the 51 FW, 7AF, PACAF, USAF, USFK, or DOD.

Pay Matters

Social Security Notch Victims

If you were born between January 1, 1917 and December 31, 1926 and are drawing Social Security benefits, it's quite likely your benefits are less than those born before or after that time period. The reason for this inequity is that in the mid-1970s, it looked like the Social Security Trust Fund was in trouble. So, in 1977, benefits were reduced for those born after December 31, 1916 and before January 1, 1927. This resulted in a "notch," where members of the group received about 20 percent less than people born earlier or later. These people are known as "Notch Victims" or "Notch Babies."

Through at least the past eight years, legislation has been introduced to correct this injustice, but efforts up to now have failed. (A House of Representative bill, H.R. 97, Notch Baby Reform, has been introduced in the 107th Congress.) A search of the Internet reveals one primary organization dedicated to Notch Victims, the Retired Enlisted Association Senior Citizens League (TREA SCL or TSCL). The proposed solution to correcting the Notch problem is a \$5,000 payment, to be paid in four annual payments of \$1,250, or increased monthly benefits for a period of four years, with the amount determined by work record and age.

TREA has included the Social Security Notch as Resolution No. 3 on its list of 24 resolutions to be addressed to legislators in 2001. TREA's solution includes the recommendation for a one-time payment of \$5,000.

If you are a Notch Victim and would like to learn more, on the Internet go to www.tscl.org. Or you can send \$1.00 for postage and handling to receive information to: TREA Senior Citizens League, Dept SF957, 909 N. Washington St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314.

WARNING: According to the Social Security-maintained site www.seniors.gov, you should beware of solicitations to sign up for the **National Victim's Register**. The register is a hoax that asks for name, date of birth and social security number. This is exactly the type of information needed for identity theft, which could destroy your credit rating. (The National Victim's Register is also being used for another hoax, based on non-existent legislation called the "Slave Reparations Act.")

(Note: Thanks to Jim Price, Osan's own Tuskegee Airman,

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B is also a requirement for the overseas beneficiaries, where TRICARE will be the prime payer on any claims. This could not be excepted for overseas beneficiaries because, if they had to receive medical care in the states, TRICARE could not pay until after Medicare paid, and if the individual was not enrolled in Medicare, clearly Medicare could not cover the claim. This would leave the individual without any medical coverage while traveling in the states, which would not be to anyone's benefit.

Senior Pharmacy Benefit: With the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act, effective 1 April 2001, over-65 TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries will receive pharmacy benefits for the first time, a benefit not available under Medicare. This will also apply to the overseas retirees who will be able to submit claims to TRICARE for their prescription drugs. Over-65 beneficiaries may also use the National Mail Order Pharmacy if they have an APO/FPO address. The pharmacy benefit is a substantial one and will mean drastically reduced out-of-pocket costs for our over-65 retirees in theater.

All beneficiaries who turn 65 prior to April 1, 2001, will automatically qualify for the benefit, whether or not they have purchased Medicare Part B. All beneficiaries, who reach the age of 65 on or after April 1, 2001, must be enrolled in Medicare Part B to receive this benefit.

Reduction in Retiree Catastrophic Cap: Another significant benefit coming to the retiree population is the reduction of the TRICARE Standard Catastrophic Cap from \$7,500 to \$3,000. A "catastrophic cap" is the upper limit on what you'll have to pay for health care - this applies to the family's annual deductibles and cost-shares for covered medical care received in any one fiscal year. Once you have reached this "cap," TRICARE Standard will pay the full billed charges for covered care provided during the rest of the fiscal year. This can drastically reduce the out-of-pocket medical care costs for the overseas retiree.

TRICARE News 01-002, Jan 22

DoD Plans Data Match with Medicare to Verify Medicare Part B Enrollment

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting Service (DEERS) Member Service Center representatives have been advising callers to update their records to confirm participation in Medicare Part B. This has led to widespread anxiety that failure to do this could deny access to TRICARE-for-Life (TFL) next October. That is not accurate.

To clarify what the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) – the group which oversees the TRICARE program – is contemplating, Steve Lillie, Director of the TFL Working Group has requested that the following information be given the widest possible dissemination.

QUOTE: We understand that there is a lot of uncertainty about whether beneficiaries need to provide evidence of their Medicare Part B enrollment in order to assure that they can get TRICARE-for-Life benefits.

Beneficiaries do not need to provide Medicare Part B information to the Department of Defense (DoD). DoD will work with the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to obtain evidence of Part B coverage for all beneficiaries.

We will be working to get the story straight on all our information sources over the next few days, and would appreciate your help in getting the word out. UNQUOTE.

The bottom-line is that the TMA is optimistic that a data match with the HCFA will enable them to electronically code the DEERS record to reflect enrollment in Medicare Part B. To set the wheels in motion, last week, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Dr. Jarrett Clinton, submitted a request to HCFA to accomplish this data match.

The Retired Officers Association Legislative Update, Feb 9

Beware of TFL Enrollment Offers

It's not surprising that, with the announcement of the TRICARE-for-Life (TFL) health care plan for Medicare-eligible uniformed services retirees and their families, someone would use it to try to make a fast buck. We've received word that at least one organization is offering to enroll people in TFL for a fee. Don't be duped!

There's NO FEE involved in signing up for TFL. IT'S FREE!!! As we've advised in the past, all you have to do to be eligible for this new program is (1) be enrolled in Medicare Part B and (2) ensure that your personal information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is current. Chances are that if nothing has changed since you received your military identification card, you're in good shape.

The Retired Officers Association Legislative Update, Feb 9

Ephedra: Another View

Turn your body into a fat-burning machine! Lose weight without exercise! Many supplements making such claims contain the herb ephedra, also known as ma huang.

Ephedra is an herb that excites the central nervous system and cardiovascular system. It basically acts like cocaine in your body, exciting the heart, constricting blood vessels, and increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Constricted blood vessels mean your body is not getting necessary oxygen during exercise. Ephedra makes you feel like you have more energy, but it also dehydrates you and overworks your kidneys. Other bad side effects include the inability to urinate, abnormal heart rhythms, cardiac arrest, dizziness, seizures, insomnia, nausea and vomiting, and death. ■

TRICARE News 01-002, Jan 22

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for bringing the significance of the Notch Victims problem to our attention.)

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

Retiree Beneficiary Card

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service - Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL) is attempting to correct information that may be misleading to retirees. According to DFAS-CL officials, on a beneficiary card sent out in September, under Legal Order of Precedence, option (2), it states "your children and their dependents, by representation." It should state "your children and their *descendents*, by representation." The form is currently being corrected for future use.

Retirees who have not yet completed and returned the card per instructions contained on the card should do so as soon as possible. DFAS-CL officials emphasize that failure to have a beneficiary for arrears of pay on file delays payment of any money due when a retiree dies. (Note: if you did not receive a card, contact the Retiree Activities Office at 784-1441 or retact@osan.af.mil.)

Also, retirees are reminded that the card has to do only with the beneficiary of arrears of pay, which is that portion of the retired pay retirees have earned in the month of their death. Example: Since retired pay is paid in arrears, (i.e., the pay received on 1 January is actually for the month of December), a retiree who lives 15 days during the month would have a half month of pay coming. Often by the time the death has been reported, a check for the entire month may have been sent out. That check would have to be returned and one for that 15 days would be issued to the beneficiary. The card that DFAS-CL sent out designates that person.

The card has no bearing on the individual designated as the beneficiary for payments due under the Survivor Benefit Plan who may, or may not, be the same person who receives the arrears of pay.

Air Force Retiree News, Jan 18

Retired pay tax guide

The Retired Officers Association (TROA) has made its "2001 Income Tax Guide" available on the Internet at www.troa.org/TaxGuide.asp.

This tax guide is also available in fact sheet format at www.troa.org/FactSheets/2001TaxGuide.asp. Membership in TROA is not required for access to this guide.

The guide provides current valuable tax information on military retired/retainer pay, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Veterans Administration (VA) disability compensation as impacted by federal and state tax laws. Also addressed in detail is SBP in terms of federal estate tax law.

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An expanded "Tax Information - Potpourri" section provides internet information for state tax rates, state tax forms, and internet/telephone numbers for states taxing military retired/retainer pay as well as SBP.

Air Force Retiree News, Jan 23

North Carolina Tax Exemption

A settlement has been reached with the state of North Carolina resulting in elimination of state taxes on government retirement benefits. It benefits taxpayers who, before August 12, 1989, had five years or more of creditable service with federal, North Carolina state or local government, including their beneficiaries or estates. This applies to military members, regardless of where they now serve. As long as they meet the five-year criteria their retired pay will be tax-exempt should they choose to retire in North Carolina at any time in the future.

Those already retired, who paid state taxes on such benefits since 1989, as well as their beneficiaries or estates, are due a refund of taxes paid since 1985. They can write the Federal Retiree Tax Equity Task force, PO Box 11484, Winston-Salem, NC 27116-1484 or call (877) TAX-CASE for more information on how to claim their refund. [Source: Shift Colors, Winter 98]

On December 21, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that the state attorney general had no standing to appeal an earlier decision finalizing settlement of a suit by North Carolina retirees to win refund of illegally collected state income taxes on military and federal civilian retired pay during the years 1989-1997. Barring any further unforeseen delays, North Carolina retirees should get their refunds in April. [Source: TROA Legislative Update, 5 Jan]

RAO Baguio City, Jan 8

Lump-Sum Vet Disability Payments Debated

A recent U.S. General Accounting Office survey showed 49 percent of veterans supported a lump-sum payment from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for disability in lieu of monthly payments, while 43 percent opposed. Meanwhile, several independent reviews support the idea because it would reduce the VA's administrative workload.

On the other hand, major veterans groups strongly oppose it. For example, Commander Armando C. Albarran of the Disabled American Veterans, says "Lump-sum settlements are merely a way for the government to avoid the administrative costs of reevaluating service-connected disabilities and as a way to avoid future liabilities to those veterans when their disabilities worsen or cause secondary disabilities." He asserted that it is disgraceful to ask disabled veterans to bargain away future entitlements merely to make it more convenient for the government. At present, the idea is only a concept that would require congressional action. ■

Armed Forces News, Feb 9

Legislation Matters

Key Bills Reintroduced in House

The following is a short list of bills of interest to the uniformed services community that were introduced during the House's first two days in session. More to come on these and others.

H.R. 65 (Rep. Bilirakis, R-FL): Authorize reduced offset of retired pay for veterans disability compensation, with an offset percentage inversely proportional to the retiree's VA disability percentage.

H.R. 179 (Rep. Shows, D-MS): Authorize retired uniformed service beneficiaries the option of coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), with no premium for members who entered service before June 7, 1956.

H.R. 303 (Rep. Bilirakis, R-FL): Authorize concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans disability compensation.

The Retired Officers Association Legislative Update, Jan 5

Sen. Thurmond Sponsors Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Age-62 Annuity Increase

Sen. Strom Thurmond's S. 145 is similar to S. 763, the bill he introduced in the last Congress. It would increase the minimum age-62 SBP annuity in stages in an effort to ease the cost objections that have stymied any adjustment so far.

Under current law, the SBP annuity for widows under age 62 provides 55% of the retired member's SBP-covered retired pay. When the widow attains age 62, the annuity declines for most surviving spouses (except for survivors of members who retired before 1957, when military members first began making contributions to Social Security). The minimum age-62 SBP annuity (which applies in the case of most members who retired after the early 1960s) is 35% of the SBP-covered retired pay.

The Retired Officers Association Legislative Update, Jan 26

Johnson Introduces Keep Our Promises Act

On February 7, 2001, Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD), was joined by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) in introducing S. 278, a companion to H.R. 179, sponsored by Rep. Ronnie Shows (D-MS). S. 278 would provide all uniformed services beneficiaries the option of enrolling in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program as an alternative to TRICARE.

This legislation is substantially the same as S. 2003, which Johnson sponsored last year, modified only to acknowledge the enactment of TRICARE-for-Life. ■

The Retired Officers Association Legislative Update, Feb 9

Community Matters

Passports Without Pain

The American Embassy in Seoul is pleased to announce that now many Americans can renew their U.S. passports without having to come to the Embassy. Previously all applications had to be made in person.

Americans can renew their existing passport without a personal appearance at the Embassy if:

- You are age 18 or over and
- You can submit your most recent passport (if your passport has been lost or stolen you'll need to apply in person; see our web site for details) and
- Your most recent U.S. passport had a validity of 10 years and
- Your most recent U.S. passport was issued to you at age 16 or older and within the past twelve years, and
- Your name will remain the same as on your most recent passport.

Full details on how to apply are available on the U.S. Embassy web site at www.asktheconsul.org. The web site also contains updated information on how to apply for a passport if you don't meet the criteria listed above, information on first passports for children, on-line registration as well as other information on the range of services provided to Americans by the Embassy. All forms needed to apply are available for downloading even if you must apply in person. Information on visas for Koreans traveling to the U.S. is also available in Korean at www.usavisas.org. ■

U.S. Embassy Warden Notice 02-03, Feb 20

Class Act Lawsuit

Plaintiffs Sam Schism, Robert Reinlie and counsel Col. George "Bud" Day of the Class Act Group are extremely proud of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit finding for the Class Act plaintiffs. The appellate court has awarded Schism/Reinlie an order of summary judgement which found that the United States breached its implied contract with the Plaintiffs to provide free, lifetime medical care, and has sent the case back to the U.S. District Court in Pensacola, FL, to award the Plaintiffs damages. The twenty-one page order finds for the plaintiffs on the issue of a wrongful taking of their property, as well as finding that the plaintiffs will be entitled to damages.

Col. Bud Day states that "an immediate request will be made to certify this case as a class action for these WW II and Korean veterans." The Class Act offices are located at 32 Beal Pkwy SW, Ft. Walton Bch., FL 32548-5398. The Internet website is www.classact-lawsuit.com and e-mail lawsuit@emeraldcoast.com.

The Retired Enlisted Association Legislative Update, Feb 19

VA Matters

VA Vocational Rehabilitation

If an injury or illness from military service causes you problems in getting or keeping a job or in living independently you can avail yourself of the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program. A VA combined service-connected disability rating of 10 percent or more makes you eligible to apply for vocational rehabilitation and scheduling for a comprehensive evaluation. As a first step during this evaluation interview, a counselor will work with you to answer three questions. For you to receive rehabilitation services and assistance under this program, the answers to all three following questions must be "yes".

- Do you meet the basic entitlement requirements?
- If you meet these requirements, is it reasonable to expect you to be able to reach an employment or independent living goal?
- Are you within the time limit for receiving this benefit? (This is generally 12 years from the date VA notified you that you had at least a 10% service-connected disability.)

If found eligible and a determination that an employment or independent living goal is reasonably feasible a plan of services and assistance to assist you to reach that goal will be developed. Counseling will be available throughout your program to help you with problems that may arise. Evaluation and counseling meetings will be scheduled at times convenient for you. The VA will pay travel expenses to and from these meetings.

Not all vocational rehabilitation programs involve training for employment. You may only need employment services to help you get a suitable job. If it is decided that you need training to reach your vocational goal the number of months to do this will be decided. You may train in a vocational school, a special rehabilitation facility, an apprenticeship program, other on-job training position, a college, or a university. While you train, VA will provide treatment for any medical or dental care, employment assistance to get and keep a job, and other services you need. VA may pay for tuition, books, equipment, tools, or other supplies you need to succeed in your program. While training and for two months after you complete training and are looking for employment, you will receive a subsistence allowance to help you meet living expenses. The allowance you receive depends on your type of training, rate of attendance, and number of dependents. You will receive this allowance in addition to any VA compensation or military retired pay you presently receive. If a vocational goal is not currently feasible for you, VA may provide services and assistance to improve your capacity for independent living. This program is designed

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for veteran's unable to work to improve their quality of life and assist in their ability to function or communicate with minimal to no assistance. An example would be providing computer equipment and training to allow access to the web and email reducing your need to rely on others.

To apply, submit a completed form VA 28-1900, Application for Vocational Rehabilitation for Service-Disabled Veterans (*forms are available at the Osan AB Retiree Activities Office*). Local representatives of veterans' service organizations and the American Red Cross also have information and forms available. [Source: VA Pamphlets 28-00-1 Jun 00 & 22-90-3 Feb 00]

Retiree Activities Office Baguio, Jan 14

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) Update

The MGIB rate for full-time training has jumped from \$552 a month to \$650 for eligible veterans with at least a three-year term of service. The rate for those with a two-year term went from \$449 a month to \$528. Payments under the Dependents Education Act climbed from \$485 a month to \$588 for eligible spouses and children of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled through their service, or who died while on active duty or shortly thereafter. Previously, the program recognized only the initial term of service for veterans who left active duty before the end of their first term and returned later, but now the VA can consider any term when deciding eligibility. Members also can now increase their contributions for larger benefits later. Participants contribute \$1,200 at the rate of \$100 each month in the first year of service, but now may increase contributions in \$4 increments to a maximum of \$600.

Armed Forces News, Jan 5

Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) Update

Before the MGIB, the VEAP was available to service members between 1977 and 1985. A 1996 law allowed participants to convert the money in their VEAP accounts to the more advantageous MGIB. However, they also had been allowed to withdraw funds, so many members had no money in their VEAP accounts, and were unable to convert to the MGIB. "As long as individuals were contributors to VEAP at any time in their military service, the new legislation allows them to convert to the GI Bill if they were on active duty on October 9, 1996, the date the previous law was enacted, and if they stayed on active duty continuously through April 1, 2000," said a VA official. To be eligible for MGIB benefits, however, VEAP-era veterans must contribute \$2,700. He explained that \$2,700 was the maximum VEAP contribution. ■

Armed Forces News, Jan 5

BIDS Reminder

Korea retirees are reminded that April 30, 2001 is the deadline for entry into the Biometric Identification System (BIDS). Visit your local pass and ID office before May 1.

Family Matters

Your Responsibility, Not Mine

Every retiree with dependents should know what benefits those dependents will receive after the retiree's death. For retirees living overseas and married to non-citizens, this is especially important. Do you have Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)? If you do and took the maximum, your survivors will receive 55% of your retired pay. How much is that? Is it enough to live on?

If you started working for Civil Service after your military retirement, have you included a survivor annuity as part of your planning for the second retirement? How much will your survivors receive?

Are you married to the person you're living with? If not, have you made any provision for that person to receive anything after your death? Or does it matter to you?

Too many retirees seem to take the easy way out – for them – and don't do anything. In the story of the grasshopper and the ant, the grasshopper preferred to fiddle away his time while the ant prepared for the future. Are you a retiree who's fiddling away his time and gambling on the future of your survivors?

If you believe the government will take care of your survivors, but you haven't "done your homework," it may come as a surprise to find out how often they're left out in the cold if they remain in Korea. There are three types of government annuities that may – I repeat, MAY – be available to your survivors.

1. If you are receiving a VA pension for a service-connected disability, and you die as a result of the service-connected disability your survivors may be eligible for the VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), currently \$911 for the surviving spouse, plus benefits for each child.
2. If you are not receiving a VA pension or your death was not the result of a service-connected cause, and your survivors have no other income or very limited income and limited assets, they may be eligible for the VA Death Pension, current \$519 for a surviving spouse, plus benefits for each child. If they have an income less than \$519 (such as from SBP), VA will make up the difference to a combined total of \$519.
3. If your surviving spouse is a U.S. citizen; or not a U.S. citizen but lived together with you in the U.S. for at least five years; or is receiving the VA DIC; or is a resident alien living in the U.S.; then the spouse may become eligible for Social Security widow(er)'s benefits at age 60. If there are minor children who are U.S. citizens, then the spouse and children may be

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eligible to receive Social Security parent's and child's benefits based on your work record. For non-resident aliens there is a mandatory, non-refundable income tax withheld of 30% on 85 percent of the benefits (which equals 25.5% of the total benefits).

In addition to the long-term benefits to ensure your survivors have sufficient income to live, you need to consider the short-term period immediately following your death. Do you have a joint bank account and expect your spouse to live on that money until the benefits start flowing? It's quite possible the account will be frozen upon your death until the estate is probated. Where will the money come from for food, rent, etc., if that happens?

Have you provided all the information necessary for your survivors to file for the benefits to which they may be entitled? In the Apr-Jun 2000 issue of *Still Serving in Korea*, there was a list of questions, the answers to which are important in filling out the forms for the various benefits. Did you take that list and fill it out? If you have a Korean spouse, did you make the Korean-language version of the list available to your spouse?

In too many cases retirees in Korea have died and left the widow with no money and no plan for the future. In some cases, the widow has had to wait many months for the benefits to start. In the worst cases, they've had to wait for 18 months to two years for the VA Death Pension to start because the information we were able to find was incomplete. That requires research to replace the missing information. The VA may require the marriage certificate or divorce decree from a previous marriage, or the death certificate of a former spouse. In any case, each delay means more time that the survivors go without benefits.

The Retiree Activities Office works hard to help survivors, but in the end it's really your responsibility, not mine, to ensure your survivors will be able to survive on their own after you're gone.

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

Emergency Assistance to Survivors

The Retiree Activities Office has been faced many times with Korean widows with no money on hand and no money coming in for the foreseeable future. In those cases, there are several agencies in Korea that have provided temporary assistance. For survivors of deceased Army retirees, there is the Army Emergency Relief (AER). For Air Force retirees, there's the Air Force Aid Society (AFAS). For those retirees who are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the VFW has provided limited emergency assistance.

Retirees should not consider these agencies as a substitute for the retiree's own responsibility to survivors. However, it's nice to know that AER, AFAS and VFW may be there when the need is most critical. ■

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

Remembering Matters

Korean War 50th Anniversary Commemoration

Veterans of the Korean War are being treated as Distinguished Visitors (DVs) during the continuing ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. Visiting veterans must register with the Foreign Visitors Bureau (FVB) upon arrival to ensure that their status as Korean War vets has been validated and they are eligible to receive the special status awarded them during all the commemoration ceremonies.

For in-country veterans of the Korean War to register for the ceremonies, contact the Korean War 50th Anniversary Committee as follows:

Phone: DSN 725-5433, Comm 02-7915-5433

Fax: DSN 725-5449, Comm 02-7915-5449

E-mail: KW50ANN@aszpbl01.korea.army.mil

Mail: 50th AKWC

Attn: Deputy OIC

PSC 303 Box 90

APO AP 96204-0090

As part of the commemoration activities, the USAF Thunderbirds will be performing at Osan AB in September and at Seoul's K-16 AB in October. ■

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

Laughing Matters

Life's Reflections

I'm not into working out. My philosophy is no pain, no pain.

I've always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific.

Ever notice when you blow in a dog's face he gets mad at you, but when you take him in a car he sticks his head out the window?

Ever notice that anyone going slower than you is a menace, but anyone going faster is a maniac?

You have to stay in shape. My friend started walking five miles a day when she was 60. She's 97 now and we have no idea where she is.

One out of every three Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of two of your best friends. If they're OK, then it must be you.

They show you how detergents take out bloodstains. I think if you've got a T-shirt with bloodstains all over it, maybe the laundry isn't your biggest problem.

from the Internet ☺

The Director's Corner

WAZZUP

In a previous newsletter, I discussed the issue of SOFA status for my position. This has not come about; in fact, 1SG Owen Robinson, USA Retired, wrote a letter to GEN Schwartz in November. The letter was routed to the United States Forces Korea (USFK) legal office, which came up with the same conclusion and recommendation it did a year ago. I am considered "ordinarily resident" under the SOFA and thus not eligible for SOFA status.

The USFK Retiree Council met on Feb 20. Some interesting discussions took place that may be of interest to the retiree community.

- A briefing has been prepared to present to GEN Schwartz by senior council members in the near future. Issues to be addressed as retiree concerns include the question of SOFA status for retiree volunteers; USFK-wide vehicle decals for retirees'

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non-SOFA vehicles; and the continuing issue of the retiree mail limitation of 16 ounces.

- The Veterans Administration is pressing on with the plan to open an office in Korea. According to Mr. Bob Howard, who will be the office director, the biggest obstacle at this point is finding office space at Yongsan. There will be a staff of about seven people, which includes Korean employees. This should significantly VA support to both active duty and retired members, as well as to the widows. In addition, all support to Korea will eventually be handled through the Seattle Regional Office, relieving some of workload of the overworked, understaffed Washington DC Regional Office.
- The Eighth Army Retirement Service Office (RSO) negotiations are still going on. Once complete and the RSO is in place, Army retirees in Korea should see a significant improvement in service-specific support. The Osan RAO will continue to operate and offer support to all retirees and widows of all services Seoul, including monthly visits to Seoul.

Jack Terwiel

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Retiree Activities Office Refresher

The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) is located at Osan Air Base, Building 936 (behind the Main Exchange), Room 114C. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 0800-1500. The RAO observes all U.S. holidays, plus the Korean Lunar New Year and Korean Chusok (Thanksgiving). The annual vacation is from Christmas Eve until two days after New Year's Day. The RAO staff currently consists of Jack Terwiel and his wife, Puneet.

On the second Tuesday of each month, the entire RAO staff (both of them) go to Yongsan Army Garrison in Seoul, so the Osan office is closed on that day. The temporary Yongsan RAO office is set up 0900-1200 in the Army Community Services Center, Building 4106, Room 118 (to the right of the Information Desk). If extensive help is required, then the individual seeking assistance is asked to visit the RAO office at Osan.

The RAO can be contacted at DSN 784-1441, commercial 031-661-1441, and there is a 24-hour answering machine available. A fax machine is available at 784-3894 (031-661-3894). The RAO can be contacted via e-mail at retact@osan.af.mil, and there is a web site at www.osan.af.mil/retireeaffairs. ■

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

US Military Retirees Association Korea

The US Military Retirees Association Korea (USMRAK) held its annual membership meeting and election of officers on December 2, 2000. More than two dozen retirees attended.

The following individuals were selected by the member to fill the three officer positions:

President - LTC Allen R. Chellis, USA Retired (re-elected)

Vice President - 1SG Owen Robinson, USA Retired (replacing Capt Jack Terwiel)

Secretary - MAJ William Horvath II, USA Retired (re-elected) ■

Osan AB Retiree Activities Office

In the Next Issue

Social Security – What benefits are available and why (or why not)

Korea Retiree Population – Where they live and how many there are