

e-Afterburner

NEWS FOR USAF RETIRED PERSONNEL

Volume 1, No. 2

AFI 36-1

July 2008

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Your Air Force needs you back!

Your Air Force needs you back to serve as a volunteer in one of the 108 Retiree Activity Offices worldwide. There are currently more than 1,800 RAO volunteers who support local commanders by donating their time to the Air Force and their local communities. But more volunteers are always needed.

Each Air Force Retiree Activity Office is made up of an all-volunteer staff of not only Air Force retirees, but retirees from other branches of service. Many RAOs have volunteers who are surviving spouses of deceased retirees.

These volunteers serve a population of about 680,000 retirees and 91,000 surviving spouses. Their motto is "Still Serving" and during 2007, these dedicated volunteers donated more than 364,000 hours to active-duty members, retirees and their families

RAO volunteers assist retirees with myriad actions by serving as an information center for space-available travel, Tricare, base services, access to the Internet, and offer referrals for financial assistance and pay matters. They also work in base hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies; help with casualty assistance; provide voluntary income tax assistance; and serve on base advisory committees. As mentors, they counsel active-duty Airmen nearing retirement, by providing literature and advice on retirement issues.

A major annual function for the RAO staff involves planning and coordinating with base agencies to set up Retiree Appreciation Day events. Local retirees and family members attend these RADs and receive flu shots by base medical personnel, briefings by different base agencies on respective services, tax preparation and advice, staff judge advocate assistance, base tours, etc.

If you would like to learn more about what you can offer your fellow retirees and local community, contact the nearest RAO. Click [here](#) for contact information.

What's going on in your Air Force

In order to keep you better informed about your Air Force, the *e-Afterburner* will regularly highlight current events affecting all Airmen. This new feature begins by presenting the recent letters to Airmen from former Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley.

Currently, Michael B. Donley is the acting secretary of the Air Force. President Bush has nominated Mr. Donley to be the next secretary of the Air Force, and Gen. Norton A. Schwartz to become the next Air Force chief of staff.

A letter to all Airmen from Secretary Wynne

The following is the text of a letter from Secretary Wynne upon his resignation:

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force, I salute you! Your dedication, motivation, and commitment are nothing short of remarkable. You are America's sword and shield, defending the United States and its global interests by delivering sovereign options in air, space, and cyberspace.

With watchful eyes and precision strike, you counter insurgents, enabling ground commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan to act freely. With humanitarian airlift, you expand our diplomatic options and serve as the face of American compassion in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma and China. With unwavering vigilance, you are America's strategic backstop, deterring any who might seek to harm us. You instill a confidence among our Allies and Joint partners that only American air, space and cyberspace power can deliver. You embrace speed, precision and crisp action, dominating with advanced technology. It is your nature to think forward.

Every day, you impress me with your innovative spirit and impetus for action. You embrace new organizing constructs and the culture of empowerment, enhancing our warfighter edge. You accelerate new technologies to the field and create unparalleled interoperability for the Joint fight, assuring America's strategic advantage of technology dominance for future generations. You infuse America's Air Force with a vector and speed that is nothing short of

extraordinary, ensuring the United States is prepared for any challenge - now and in the future. Your energy and drive are contagious.

Ours is the profession of arms. We are entrusted by the American people and our national leaders to protect and defend the ideals embodied in our Constitution, and thus secure our very way of life. Given this special trust and confidence, we hold ourselves to the highest standard of accountability. Our values of Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do form the bedrock of all of our actions.

My heart is filled with pride in the accomplishments of America's Airmen. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your 21st Secretary of the Air Force.

On behalf of Barb and I, our thoughts and prayers shall ever be with you, your families, and the Nation that we serve. As always, the future of the Air Force rests in the best of hands - yours.

MICHAEL W. WYNNE
Secretary of the Air Force

A letter to all Airmen from General Moseley

The following is the text of a letter from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley upon his resignation:

It has been my highest honor to serve our great country as an Airman for almost 37 years. In peace and in war, I've had the privilege of serving alongside countless outstanding men and women -- Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines -- who have pledged themselves to our country's defense. I was honored and humbled to be appointed the Air Force's 18th Chief of Staff and have been proud to serve our Airmen, their families, and the American people in that role. Upon taking the oath of office, I committed myself to Secretary Wynne and to the Air Force to ensure we provided the right forces at the right time so that our Nation and its allies are victorious in the Global War on Terror and ready to meet future challenges. Working to fulfill that commitment and do the right thing for America and its Airmen, at a crucial point in history, has been the most rewarding experience of my life.

Given my pride in our Service and its distinguished history, you can imagine how it pained me to read the recent report concerning lapses in the control of nuclear-related assets. The profession of arms is a demanding one, and the expectations are as high as the stakes of national security. As our Service's senior uniformed leader, I take full responsibility for these events that have hurt the Air Force's reputation and wrongly raised questions about our commitment to our Core Values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do. The Nation places a sacred trust in its Airmen, and I have a deep personal

belief that I am accountable for that trust. Therefore, the honorable thing for me to do is to step aside at this time. Secretary Gates has approved my request for retirement.

You are the strongest and finest Air Force the world has ever known. And you will do whatever is necessary to make the Air Force even stronger. Most importantly, you will continue waging and winning today's fight as part of the Joint Team, even as you take care of our Airmen and prepare for tomorrow's challenges. Before I depart the fix with an unceasing admiration of your devotion to our Country, let me thank you one last time for all you do every day for the Air Force and our great Nation. Jennie and I are immensely proud of having served with each and every one of you, and our hearts remain with you and our Air Force. I am an American Airman, and I always will be.

Fly, Fight, and Win...now and forever!

Sincerely,

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

All-volunteer force celebrates anniversary

The following is courtesy of Ted Daywalt, the Veteran Eagle, VetJobs.com:

“January 24 saw a little publicized anniversary, the 36th year of the all-volunteer force. We now have two generations of Americans who have had no contact or experience with the military. In 1970, one in 10 working adults in the United States had served in the military.

“Today, about one in 250 have had any military experience and that number is growing rapidly. This is also reflected in the Congress, which has seen a drastic reduction in the number of people who have had any military experience. It behooves those who have served to be sure the American public and our elected officials understand the problems the military must face and the fact that the men and women of the military do their duty voluntarily.

“To put this in perspective, today there are only 1.4 million on active duty, and 1.3 million in the Guard and Reserve. This means that only .8 percent (yes, only eight-tenths of 1 percent) of our population is defending the other 99.2 percent. We have a much smaller, but vastly more capable military today than in the past.”

Editor's Note

The new Web site for Air Force retirees is proving to be a success. We've received many suggestions for improvements including ideas for additions to "Resources" section. Please keep the feedback – positive or negative -- coming! All we ask is that you remember there is a "live" human on the receiving end so please keep it clean and respectful. Just send an e-mail to afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil.

While we're on the subject, afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil is an official Air Force e-mail address. Please don't send cartoons or jokes, or add it to your mailing list for such items, as I stay busy enough handling official e-mail. Although I appreciate and enjoy a good knee-slapper, I really have others things I should be "appreciating" and "enjoying" (just ask my boss).

Another way you can help me is by helping yourself. With more than 55,000 electronic subscribers and only one of me, I stay quite busy with e-mail requests to change subscribers' e-mail addresses. There is a simple "self-help" way you can do this:

1. Click on "Subscribe" found on the top navigation bar at www.retirees.af.mil.
2. Click on the "Unsub" dot for "Afterburner/AFRNS" in the second column of the product listing, third option down.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your old e-mail address.
4. Click on "Submit"
5. Go back up and click on the "Sub" dot for the "Afterburner/AFRNS" in the second column of products, third option down.
6. Scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your new e-mail address.
7. Click on "Submit"

Of course, I'm ready to assist people who experience difficulties (the system has been known to "hiccup"), or just need one-on-one help with subscribing or anything else on the Web site.

Special thanks to Maj. Bill Rowley and Master Sgt. Michael R. Huber, two Air Force retirees, for their contributions to this edition of the *e-Afterburner*. Major Rowley is a member of the Civil Air Patrol and suggested a story on that organization, and Sergeant Huber is in law enforcement and offers his thoughts on safe-guarding your DD Form 214.

As always, remember that many of our retirees, spouses and surviving spouses don't have a computer, or access to one. If you know someone who doesn't have computer access and would like to read the *e-Afterburner*, maybe you could print out a copy for them.

Enjoy the latest *e-Afterburner*!

Tammy Cournoyer
Retiree Services Section

Retiree weighs in on proper DD Form 214 storage

The following was submitted by retired Master Sgt. Michael R. Huber, community services officer, Tucson (Arizona) Police Department:

Greetings!

I read with interest the article in the latest e-Afterburner (February 2008, "Now, Where Did I Put That Thing?") regarding the importance of the DD Form 214 to retirees and survivors. When I retired in 1999, I was told by the personnel office's retiree section to put a certified copy of my DD Form 214 on file with the county clerk's office. That way there would always be a copy available to me if I ever suffered a fire, flood, tornado, or other catastrophic loss of my files at home.

HOWEVER, there is one major problem with that. Once it was on file in the county clerk's office, it became a matter of public record. That means that ANYONE with \$2 in his or her pocket can request a copy of it under the Freedom of Information Act of 1974. Had I known that when I retired, I would never have filed it there.

Once criminals have your DD Form 214, they have your name, Social Security number, home town, military record, and a number of other pieces of valuable information that make identity theft a snap. The DD Form 214, in and of itself, can be used to help obtain a copy of a birth certificate in several states. With the info from the DD Form 214, it would not be difficult to convince your friendly local base personnel staff to give you a "replacement" retiree ID card for the one "you" lost. With a birth certificate and a retiree ID card, you have what you need to get a driver's license. Then the snowball rolls hard and fast downhill, picking up speed (and credit cards) until it slams into the poor hapless victim at the bottom. In short, a retiree's DD Form 214 is "Willy Wonka's golden ticket" to an identity thief.

I would suggest telling all retirees that IF they choose to file their DD 214 at the county clerk's office or have already done so, to check on how to seal the record against unauthorized disclosures. With identity theft being the fastest growing crime in America, it is in a veteran's best interest to protect that document carefully. A better option might be putting a certified copy in a safe place such as a fireproof box located at a relative's home in another city.

Armed Forces Retirement Home provides exceptional living

The following is a message from the Armed Forces Retirement Home:

The Armed Forces Retirement Home continues to provide exceptional retirement living and care for eligible retirees. This demonstrates to today's servicemembers -- and tomorrow's retirees -- that their service and sacrifices will not be forgotten. Just as America's brave young men and women safeguarded the world in the 20th century, today's active-duty forces can fight for and preserve our way of life knowing their country will repay them for their dedicated service.

Known as a premier retirement community, the home offers residential living quarters, advanced health care, and essential social services. Also provided is a host of recreational, entertainment and creative programs rooted in the health and wellness philosophy. For residents, it all means an enjoyable, well-rounded retirement.

Retirees with 20 years or more of active-duty service who are at least 60 years old are eligible to become AFRH residents. Retiree's active-duty service in the military must be at least 50 percent enlisted and/or warrant officer. Married couples are welcome, but both must be eligible in their own right. Currently, the pool of eligible residents is growing fast. Many Vietnam War veterans are rapidly approaching retirement age.

The best way to experience the retirement community is to visit in person. Prospective residents are encouraged to tour the campus in Washington, D.C. To schedule a visit call the AFRH Marketing Team at (800) 422-9988 or visit the Web site at www.afrh.gov. The AFRH campus in Gulfport, Miss., is scheduled to reopen in late 2010.

Civil Air Patrol offers volunteer opportunities

Air Force retirees looking for ways to "still serve" may want to consider volunteering with the Civil Air Patrol.

Established in December 1941, this non-profit organization is America's Air Force Auxiliary and has more than 56,000 members, including 22,000 cadets ages 12 to 21.

The Civil Air Patrol's vision involves building the nation's finest force of citizen volunteers who perform missions for America including homeland security and humanitarian missions at the community, state and national level; developing the nation's youth; and educating citizens on the importance of air and space power.

Volunteers are the "the heart and soul of Civil Air Patrol," according to Brig. Gen. Amy Courter, interim CAP national commander. They serve in a variety of roles with 1,500 units nationwide.

For more information on CAP volunteer opportunities, visit the organization's Web site at <http://www.cap.gov/index.cfm>.

RAO Spotlight

(Editor's Note: There are nearly 1,800 volunteers "Still Serving" in Retiree Activities Offices worldwide. These volunteers deserve our heartfelt thanks for all they do. If you wish to shine the spotlight on a volunteer who has provided you with outstanding service, please send an e-mail to afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil)

I read your latest issue of the *e-Afterburner* and saw the article about the good-doing retiree activities office at Ellsworth AFB, S.D. I am in Thailand and I'd like to spotlight our RAO at the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group-Thailand installation.

Retired Air Force Maj. John B. Dyste is in his 80s and still on the job every day. He is sort of a legend at this place.

I always see him busy helping the Thai wives of Americans as well as GIs. His office is usually busy all day. If I need any info he can usually provide it. He sends out an informative quarterly newsletter, too.

So a big "Atta Boy" to John.

Lt. Col. C.J. Clemens
USAF, Retired

Education grants benefit retiree family

Since its inception in 1942, the Air Force Aid Society has been committed to helping Air Force members and their families realize their academic goals. In recent years, the society's emphasis has been on direct funding of new initiatives that provide greater value to Air Force families.

The centerpiece of the society's education initiatives is the General Henry H. Arnold Education Grant Program which provides \$2,000 grants to selected dependent sons and daughters of Air Force retirees, deceased retirees, and the surviving spouses of Air Force retirees. Use of funds is limited to tuition, books, fees, or other curriculum-required materials.

This grant program remains competitive in its need-based selection criteria, uniquely tailored to recognize the proper weighing of family income and education cost factors. It is administered by ACT Recognition Program Services, an independent, not-for-profit organization with more than 40 years experience in providing support services to scholarship sponsors.

Students must be enrolled or accepted in an accredited college, university or vocational/trade school approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in federal aid programs. They must maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 grading scale.

AFAS sections receive bulk quantities of grant applications by Nov. 1 each year, and the application deadline is mid-March of the following year. For more information, visit http://www.afas.org/Education/body_grant.cfm.

Report fraud, stolen valor

Retirees can now report fraud or acts of stolen valor to the Office of Inspector General. To report suspected fraud involving veteran's benefits, other crimes such as stolen valor (distributors of phony medals and those who fraudulently claim to be decorated veterans), or Veteran's Affairs fraud, waste or mismanagement, contact the IG hotline at (800) 488-8244. People may also send e-mail to vaoig.hotline@forum.va.gov, or write to VA OIG HOTLINE, PO Box 50410, Washington, DC 20091-0410. (Courtesy of vetjobs.com)

Protect your retirement income from long-term care costs

by Debra J. Caruso
DJC Communications

Just as life insurance and disability insurance offer financial protection during your working years, long-term care insurance can protect your retirement income once you stop working.

Long-term care insurance is intended to preserve your income and assets by covering the costs associated with a long term care event. This insurance pays for custodial care at home or in a facility when you can no longer live independently and need help with daily living because of a chronic disease, illness or cognitive impairment.

Contrary to what many Americans believe, Medicare and private health insurance cover few, if any, long-term care expenses, and Medicaid is available only to those with low income and assets. Unless you own long-term care insurance, you probably will have to cover the costs yourself. Currently, a private room in a nursing home averages approximately \$75,000 annually, while a home health aide working a 40-hour week typically runs \$53,000 per year (according to Genworth's 2007 Cost of Care Study). For two to three years of care, which is now the norm, the total cost is well into six figures.

If you were faced with a long-term care event and had to pay for these expenses out of your retirement income, what would the consequences be? Could you and/or your spouse have the comfortable retirement lifestyle you had planned

and pay for care? Could you maintain your financial commitments to family members such as helping with a child's home purchase or paying for a grandchild's education? And would it be possible to continue contributing to your community and favorite charities? If you can't answer "yes" to these questions -- and the vast majority of Americans can't -- owning long-term care insurance may be a sensible and cost effective solution.

As a member of the federal family, you are eligible to apply for coverage under the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program, or FLTCIP. The program gives federal employees and annuitants, including active-duty and retired members of the uniformed services, the opportunity to apply for substantial coverage at favorable group premiums.

Established by Congress in 2000 and overseen by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the FLTCIP is designed with flexibility to meet the specific needs of the federal family.

You can begin your long-term care planning by calling the program toll free at (800) 582-3337; TTY (800) 843-3557. A certified long-term care insurance consultant will speak to you about your particular situation, your coverage options, the application process, and of course, answer any questions you may have. Certain medical conditions or combinations of conditions will prevent some people from being approved for coverage. You need to apply to find out if you are eligible to enroll. (Courtesy of DJC Communications)

Group searches people who served at Misawa Air Base

by retired Master Sgt. Joe Soboul

If you served with the U.S. Air Force Security Service at Misawa Air Base, Japan, chances are your name will turn up on a set of military orders; however, do not fret -- you are not about to be recalled to active duty.

Instead, copies of old military orders are being used in a search to locate old friends who served at Misawa. When contacted, old-timers usually recall fond memories of what many consider their best Air Force assignment. You too can join in and share those latent memories by contacting Helen Johns Henderson of St. Augustine, Fla., at etaya49@hotmail.com or telephone her at (904)829-9235.

A soft drink slogan years ago, when translated from English into Chinese, came out as, "It brings your ancestors back from the grave." Ms. Henderson says she never sipped a soft drink in China, but did serve in the Far East where she did translations as a Russian language specialist at Misawa AB from 1973 to 1975.

What made Ms. Henderson come alive?

It all began in St. Augustine, Fla., in 1972 when Ms. Henderson enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. She attended basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, before moving on to Russian language training at the Department of Defense Language Institute at Monterey, Calif.

Nearly a quarter century passed before Ms. Henderson's nostalgic wondering in 1999, "What ever happened to... ?" that started her on a search for classmates from Monterey. Armed with copies of military orders, 35 of 38 graduates were located in time for a class reunion held in June 2000 at Greensboro, N.C., with eight former classmates getting together again.

A visit to Monticello, Ark., in September 2000 provided the genesis for the Misawa Web-site project. Over the years, Ms. Henderson had kept in touch with Tommy Green, a friend from her Misawa assignment.

"After listening to my stories about the search for my Russian-language classmates, Tommy suggested that I look for some of the people who served with us in operations at Misawa," said Ms. Henderson. Mr. Green and his wife, Debby, assisted Ms. Henderson and came up with a list of 20 names: The Misawa Web site project was born.

Using her mother's computer and a free Internet account, she immediately began searching names on the list. The first person to reconnect with was Chip Ulbert of Kenosha, Wis.

"What a thrill that gave me," Ms. Henderson said. "It motivated me to press on."

In 1979, Security Service was re-designated as the Electronic Security Command. The Web site project was expanded to include all those who had served on Misawa's "Security Hill," but the focus narrowed on the Security Service years 1949 to 1979.

The MyFamily.com Web site opened Nov. 16, 2000, with 500 members. Today, the membership count stands at 2,895. The group is comprised primarily of former intelligence specialists, but also includes personnel from maintenance, administrative, security police, logistics and others. Surviving spouses and children of deceased members are also eligible.

A second Web site at <http://usafssmisawa.com> is open to the public. The site was started in 2002 by Dutch Wiest and he maintains it. Ms. Henderson said hundreds of Internet surfers have used his site as a "gateway" to join the Misawa Web site.

The fifth national Misawa reunion was held in Baltimore, Md., June 21 to 24, 2007, with 188 attending compared to the first reunion held in Biloxi, Miss., on May 16, 2003, with 39 in attendance.

“The bonds forged in military service are strong and the bonds formed in the USAF Security Service are among the strongest.” Ms. Henderson said as she ended by echoing the words of Misawa veteran Ed Wagaman of Palestine, W. Va. “We are a tightly knit group of loosely knit people.”

If you need to contact the *Afterburner*...

The *Afterburner* address:

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Randolph AFB TX 78150

E-mail address is afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil and the phone number is (210) 565-2126. Retirees may write to the co-chairmen of the Air Force Retiree Council by using the office symbol, HQ AFPC/CCU, at the address above.