

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
LACKLAND RETIREE ASSISTANCE OFFICE
NEWSLETTER APRIL 2011

Get A Military Benefit Guide Book

We know that understanding your military benefits can be a difficult thing to accomplish. Terry Howell, Military.com's benefit expert, has written "The Military Advantage, 2010 Edition: The Military.com Guide to **MILITARY & VETERANS BENEFITS.**" It is available at Amazon.com. Visit the Military.com benefit section for more information on TRICARE, VA Home Loans, Veteran Benefits, GI Bill, Tuition Assistance, Military Pay, Uniforms and Space-A Travel.

RAO DIRECTOR REMARKS, Robert C. Zaske Director

The RAO staff makes every effort to keep you up to date on information affecting military retiree's benefits and legislation pertaining to their quality of life. The Lackland RAO is still operating out of building 5616 room 129. We can be reached by phone at 210-671-2728/9182. Our hours are Tuesday and Thursday 0900 to 1500, and Wednesday from 0900 to 1400 hours. Our newsletter is available online at our website www.lackland.af.mil. We can also provide retirees the newsletters by mail or email. If you would like the newsletter mailed to you, please provide us with a good mailing address for you. Our mailing address is: Retiree Assistance Office, 1561 Stewart St. Room 129 Lackland AFB 78236-5111. We are also looking for RAO volunteers. Please let us know if you are interested.

TRICARE Promotes Cancer Screenings

The beginning stages of colorectal cancer often have no symptoms. Because of this, early screening saves lives. For TRICARE Prime and Standard beneficiaries, there are no cost shares or co-pays for colorectal cancer screenings. For Medicare-eligible beneficiaries covered by TRICARE For Life, Medicare covers colorectal cancer screening tests and TRICARE generally pays the remainder of any costs not paid by Medicare.

To learn more about colorectal screenings, visit the CDC'S Screen for Life Campaign Webpage at <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/sfl/>

For more information about TRICARE's coverage of colorectal cancer screenings, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil>.

Stay TRICARE eligible: Keep DEERS up-to-date

By Sharon Foster
TRICARE Management Activity

3/9/2011 - **FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFNS)** -- Beneficiaries who have recently experienced a life changing event, such as the birth or adoption of a child, or recent divorce or marriage

should immediately record these changes in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS. If they wait, their TRICARE benefit coverage could be affected.

"Life comes at you fast and beneficiaries should not wait to update DEERS when they experience any life event that changes their TRICARE status," said John Arendale, chief of the Purchased Care Systems Integration Branch at the TRICARE Management Activity. "What beneficiaries don't want to experience is a lapse in TRICARE coverage because their DEERS eligibility information is incorrect."

Incorrect information can potentially impact a beneficiary's ability to get a prescription filled, get a medical claim paid or make an appointment to see a doctor. Beneficiaries can easily avoid these types of problems by making sure their DEERS record is accurate.

DEERS is the worldwide, computerized database designed to maintain timely and accurate information on service members and dependents who are eligible for military benefits and entitlements, including TRICARE. It also is used to detect and prevent fraud and abuse. All sponsors are automatically registered in DEERS. The sponsor must register all eligible family members. Once the registration process is complete, the family members can update their personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers.

Events that change a beneficiary's TRICARE status include: relocation, retirement, change of address, change in marital status, birth, death, adoption or Medicare entitlement.

A beneficiary can register eligible new family members in DEERS at the nearest military personnel office or uniformed services identification card issuing office. To find an office near them, they can go to the **Rapids Site Locator** website, www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home. Beneficiaries can call to update contact information only at 1-800-538-9552.

To register a child in DEERS, bring the following forms:

- An original or certified-copy of the birth certificate or certificate of live birth (signed by the attending physician or other responsible person from a U.S. hospital or military treatment facility) or consular report of birth (FS-240) for children overseas;
- A record of adoption or a letter of placement of the child into the home by a recognized placement/adoption agency or the court before the final adoption; and
- A DD form 1172 signed by the sponsor and verifying official from a uniformed services ID card-issuing facility.

Get more information on DEERS eligibility at www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/default.cfm.

"Updating information in DEERS is the key to maintaining eligibility for TRICARE and other military benefits," Mr. Arendale said.

HEALTH CARE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

The DOD In Transition program assigns a service member or veteran to a personal coach who will: (1) coach them the Transition Program call the one-on-one through transition, (2) connect them with their new provider, and (3) empower them with tools to help them continue making healthy life choices. To view the new public service announcement videos about the program, visit the In Transition website. For more information about the confidential, toll-free number 1-800-424-7877.

WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS

The U.S. Senate declared March 30 as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day,” agreeing unanimously to resolution introduced by Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. March 30 marks the anniversary of the day in 1973 that Congress ended combat and combat support unit operations in South Vietnam. The Senate is encourages everyone to recognize Vietnam veterans for their service and sacrifice.

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Save Money with Home Delivery! If you currently fill your TRICARE prescriptions for maintenance medications at retail pharmacies, you can reduce your out-of-pocket costs by switching to TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. For information call the Member Choice Center at (877) 363-1433 to transfer existing prescriptions to Home Delivery.

How to Change Your Federal Income Tax Withholding

Many retirees have completed their 2010 tax returns and depending on the outcome, some may want to change their federal income tax withholding.

You can do so using myPay or by completing an IRS Form W-4 and faxing or mailing it to DFAS:

Fax Number: 800-469-6559

Mailing Address:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service

U.S. Military Retirement Pay

P.O. Box 7130

London, KY 40742-7130

Please keep in mind that changing your withholding does not change your tax liability and you will have to pay any remaining amount owed when you file your return next April.

HOW TO CHECK ON THE STATUS OF YOUR CLAIM:

Here are three ways for you to check on the status of your claim or appeal.

1. Call the VA Toll Free No. 1 800 827 1000
2. Go on line to www.ebenefits.va.gov
3. Send the VA an email at www.iris.va.gov

When you call the toll free number, be sure to specify whether you are asking about a claim or an appeal. Appeal cases are located on a different computer screen.

When you go on-line to the VA e-benefits website, you will have to first create a user name and a password. After that, you can check on the status of your claim. If you have any problems registering for e-benefits, call 1 800 983 0937 for customer support.

Other Helpful Numbers:

<u>Direct Deposit</u>	<u>1 -877-838-2778</u>
<u>Help Line (Agent Orange & Gulf War)</u>	<u>1-800-749-8387</u>
<u>Life Insurance</u>	<u>1-800-699-8477</u>
<u>Office of SGLI & VGLI</u>	<u>1-800-419-1473</u>
<u>VA Fraud Line</u>	<u>1-800-488-8244</u>
<u>Vet Center (Windcrest)</u>	<u>210-650-0422 (Braun) 210-688-0606</u>
<u>Headstones or Markers</u>	<u>1-800-697-6947</u>
<u>Education or Training</u>	<u>1-888-442-4551</u>
<u>Debt Management Center</u>	<u>1-800-827-0648</u>
<u>CHAMPVA</u>	<u>1-800-733-8387</u>
<u>Health Care</u>	<u>1-877-222-8387</u>
<u>Special Health Issues</u>	<u>1-800-749-8387</u>

DOD to drop Social Security numbers from ID cards

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Beginning June 1, Social Security numbers on military identification cards will begin to disappear, said Air Force Maj. Monica M. Matoush, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The effort is part of a larger plan to protect service members and other DOD identification card holders from identity theft, officials said.

Criminals use Social Security numbers to steal identities, allowing them to pillage resources, establish credit or to hijack credit cards, bank accounts or debit cards.

Currently, the Social Security number is printed on the back of common access cards, and on the front of cards issued to dependents and retirees. Beginning in June, when current cards expire, they will be replaced with new cards having a DOD identification number replacing the Social Security number, officials said. The DOD identification number is a unique 10-digit number that is assigned to every person with a direct relationship with the department.

The new number also will be the service member's Geneva Convention identification number.

An 11-digit DOD benefits number also will appear on the cards of those people eligible for DOD benefits. The first nine digits are common to a sponsor, the official said, and the last two digits will identify a specific person within the sponsor's family.

Social Security numbers embedded in the bar codes on the back of identification cards will remain there for the time being, and will be phased out beginning in 2012.

The department will replace identification cards as they expire.

"Because cards will be replaced upon expiration, it will be approximately four years until all cards are replaced with the DOD ID number," Matoush said.

The identity protection program began in 2008, when DOD started removing Social Security numbers from family member identification cards.

For more retiree news and information, please visit www.retirees.af.mil (<http://lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2552468/7143327/511/0/>).

Upgrade Notification

The Navy's Web Scheduler/CAC Event Scheduler has been upgraded and the URL has changed. Please bookmark this page and delete the old bookmark from your Favorites. Welcome to Appointment Scheduler

- To make a new appointment, click the Make Appointment button
- To lookup an appointment you have already made, click the Find Appointment button
- To cancel an appointment, click the Cancel Appointment button

Wish you could make an appointment for a new ID card for you and your dependents? Now you can!

All you need is access to a computer (no CAC is required) from the comfort of your home or office by visiting the following web site: <http://appointments.cac.navy.mil>.

DISCLAIMER:

The opinions expressed by writers of this newsletter for our web site are their own and should not be construed to be the official position or policy of DOD, USAF, or LAFB. The RAO publishes this newsletter to inform AF retirees and their family members of changes to legislation, defense policies and others matters affecting their military rights, benefits and other obligations. It contains information about LAFB and the local retiree community. While every effort is made to verify information in this newsletter, the RAO "Volunteer" staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of information furnished by outside agencies. We have used info from other bases plus with permission and from the following areas: Military Com; MOAA, NAUS and others.