



**RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE
92 FSS/RAO
7 W ARNOLD ST
FAIRCHILD. WA 99011**



STILL SERVING

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RAO MISSION

The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) acts as an interface between the active duty and retired communities. It keeps retirees and their loved ones informed on matters related to their military status. It provides important information and vital services on issues regarding TRICARE, military ID cards, Survivor benefits, Death Reporting and much more. The RAO also maintains a list of phone numbers, Web sites and e-mail addresses to assist retirees in their military affiliated endeavors.

The main office is located at 7W Arnold, Bldg 2040, Suite 109 at Fairchild AFB. The office is open from 1000 to 1400 Tuesday through Fridays except on Holidays and when Base personnel are otherwise occupied. The office can be reached via telephone (509) 247-5359 or by email, 92mss.rao@us.af.mil.

A satellite office is located at 825 Jadwin, Room 138 in Richland, WA. Office hours are from 1000 to 1400 Wednesday through Friday except Holidays. The office can be reached via telephone, (509) 376-6348 or by e-mail, military_rao@rl.gov.

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY 2011

Fairchild Air Force will be hosting a Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) on June 16, 2011. The RAD will be held at DEEL community Center which is located at W 5 Bong from 0900 hrs to 11200 hrs. All retirees and their families are encouraged to attend. There will be a briefing by the Base Commander. People from the Medical Section, Personnel (ID Card) Section, Base Exchange, Commissary & Veterans Administration will be there to assist with any questions or problems you may have.

When entering the Base from the Main gate, continue straight on Mitchell Ave until you have to turn right or left. Turn left onto Bong. The first building on the left (1 block) will be the Deel Community Center.

There will be cookies and coffee available at the RAD. Attendees will be on their own for lunch. Club Fairchild has been closed so the BX, The Fun Spot or Burger King are available for meals.

FAIRCHILD RAO WEB PAGE

The RAO has a web page on the Fairchild AFB web site. This page has been designed to provide information and links to services that are available to retirees of all services. Information that would be of interest to retirees is kept updated. There are links to the National Personnel Records Center, Defense Finance and Accounting, Retiree Newsletters from all the services along with the latest newsletter from the Fairchild RAO, an ID Card Renewal Center locator and many other web sites for retirees. This web page can be viewed by using the following URL.

<http://www.fairchild.af.mil/library/retireeactivitiesoffice/>

POLICY CHANGE FOR REPLACING ID CARD

Homeland security Directive 12 now requires retirees and family members seeking to renew or replace a military identification card to provide two types of ID. They must have two of the following types of current identification, one of which must include a photo.

- Drivers license or ID issued by a state or outlying US commonwealth or possession.
- ID card issued by federal, state or local government agencies or entities.
- School Id card with photograph.
- Voters registration card.
- US military ID card.
- US passport.
- Certificate of US citizenship.
- Certificate of naturalization.

For persons younger than 18

- School record or report card.
- Clinic, doctor, or hospital record
- Day care or nursery school record

Before visiting a military ID card issuing facility, people may want to call to determine what specific documents are required and to verify the process to renew or replace an ID card. The ID card facility at Fairchild AFB is in building 2040 located at 7 W Arnold, Suite 109. The phone number is 509-247-4029. For other locations go to <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home>. On this web site one can search by city, state, or ZIP code (As reported in the Department of the Air Force HQ 914th Airlift Wing newsletter dated Aug-Oct 2009)

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Vehicle base stickers are no longer required at Fairchild AFB, Washington and many of the other Air Force Bases.

The Gate Sentries will be checking the driver's Military ID during regular hours. The driver can vouch for the other occupants in the vehicle. After hours the ID's of all occupants in a vehicle will be checked. The ID of other occupants in the vehicle can be any picture ID.

Gate Sentries will check for compliance for state requirements (insurance, vehicle safety inspections, etc.), on a random basis. Be sure that you have your vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

If you frequently visit non-Air Force Military bases, you may wish to leave your current decal on your vehicle. Otherwise, the Air Force recommends (not mandates) that you remove your decal. In this way, you won't advertise (to terrorists, criminals and foreign intelligence operatives) that you're a member of the Department of Defense while off base.

Visitors to the base will continue to use the normal visitor procedures established by the installation commander.

DISCLAIMER: The *Still Serving Newsletter* is an unofficial publication written, edited and published by the Fairchild AFB Retiree Activities Office. The publication is for the convenience of the retiree population to include **retirees, their spouses and dependent family members**. While every effort is made to verify the information in this newsletter, neither the editor nor the RAO staff can guarantee the accuracy of information received from outside sources. The editor reserves the right to reduce the length of material to fit the space available. Comments may be directed to the Retiree Activities Office, 92 FSS/RAO, 7 W Arnold St, Suite 109, Fairchild AFB, WA 99011. (509) 247-5359

Jim R. Smith - Director/Newsletter
SGM, USA (RET)

NO MORE “Check’s in the Mail...”

The Treasury Department is switching millions of people who receive Social Security and other federal benefits from paper checks sent in the mail to electronic payments. The switch will save more than \$300 million each year through 2016, and then \$125 million each year thereafter. The switch will start with new enrollees. People already receiving checks in the mail will be shifted beginning in March, 2013. “We want to allow plenty of time to educate benefit recipients,” said Dick Gregg, acting fiscal assistant secretary.

A bank account will not be necessary to receive benefits payments electronically, as Treasury will send a debit card preloaded with the money, though currently only one free transaction on the card per month is allowed.

NEW TRICARE PROGRAM OFFERS COVERAGE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Uniformed services dependents younger than 26, unmarried, and not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health care coverage may be qualified to purchase TRICARE for Young Adults (TYA), which offers TRICARE Standard coverage for monthly premiums of \$186.

A premium-based TRICARE Prime benefit will be available later this year.

Dependent eligibility for TRICARE previously ended at age 21, or age 23 for full-time college students. Similar to provisions in the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, TYA extends the opportunity for young adults to continue TRICARE health care coverage, as long as their sponsor is still eligible for TRICARE.

Complete information and application forms are available at www.tricare.mil/tya. TRICARE officials encourage beneficiaries to explore all possible health care plan options and costs when choosing a plan that best meets their needs.

Those considering TYA should determine if they are eligible before completing and sending in an application. The application and payment of three months of premiums can be dropped off at a TRICARE Service Center or sent by mail or faxed directly to the appropriate regional health care contractor.

Beneficiaries can find out where to send their form and payment by filling out the simple profile at www.tricare.mil to get information tailored to their specific location. Once the initial payment is made, monthly premiums must be paid in advance through automated electronic payment.

When the application is processed, TRICARE coverage will begin the first day of the following month. Because TYA was “fast-tracked” to begin enrollment as soon as systems changes, forms, premiums and other rules governing the program were approved and in place, TRICARE Management Activity will allow eligible applicants to be covered for all of May as long as enrollment forms and payment are received (not postmarked) by the regional contractor before May 31.

Those eligible for TYA who have been saving receipts since Jan. 1 in anticipation of the new program, can also pay all premiums back to January to purchase coverage retroactively.

After getting a welcome letter and enrollment card, dependents and their sponsor are encouraged to visit uniformed services identification card issuing facility to obtain a dependent ID card. The card will assist in identifying the dependent as eligible for health care, prescriptions and access to military installations.

The signing of the National Defense Authorization Act in January 2011, brought TRICARE in line with the provisions of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and enabled the extension of excellent TRICARE coverage to this new group.

GATES PROPOSES PREMIUM INCREASE FOR RETIRES HEALTH CARE

by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates is seeking modest premium increases for working-age military retirees who use the TRICARE Prime health plan.

Secretary Gates unveiled sweeping cost-cutting initiatives Jan. 6, including a recommendation to increase TRICARE Prime premiums for working-age retirees in fiscal 2012, the first increase in the plan's 15-year history.

"For some time, I've spoken about the department's unaffordable health costs, and in particular the benefits provided to working-age retirees under the TRICARE program," the secretary told reporters.

"Many of these beneficiaries are employed full-time while receiving their full pensions, and often forego their employers' health plan to remain with TRICARE," he said. "This should not come as a surprise, given that the current TRICARE enrollment fee was set in 1995 at \$460 a year for the basic family plan, and has not been raised since."

Secretary Gates noted the dramatic increase in insurance premiums during that period for private-sector and other government employees. Federal workers pay roughly \$5,000 a year for a comparable health insurance program, he said.

"Accordingly, with the fiscal year 2012 budget, we will propose reforms in the area of military health care to better manage medical cost growth and better align the department with the rest of the country," Secretary Gates said. "These will include initiatives to become more efficient, as well as modest increases to TRICARE fees for ... working-age retirees, with fees indexed to adjust for medical inflation."

These initiatives could save the department as much as \$7 billion over the next five years, he said.

Military retirees automatically are enrolled in one of two TRICARE plans, program spokesman Austin Camacho explained. Retirees who join TRICARE Prime, the system's managed-care option that covers active-duty members, pay an annual enrollment fee of \$230 per year for an individual or \$460 for a family. Those in TRICARE Standard, a fee-for-service plan, pay no enrollment fee or premium. Instead, they pay a yearly deductible of \$150 per person or \$300 per family, as well as co-payments or cost shares for inpatient and outpatient care and medications, up to a \$3,000 annual cap on out-of-pocket expenses.

TRICARE Prime, the managed-care option that covers all active-duty members and many retirees, costs the government \$4,202 per beneficiary per year, said Mr. Camacho. TRICARE Standard, the program's fee-for-service plan, costs \$3,584 per beneficiary per year. TRICARE for Life, for beneficiaries age 65 and older, costs the government \$3,874 per patient per year.

Military retirees are not required to report whether they have jobs that offer insurance plans, Mr. Camacho said, noting that having other insurance does not take them off the TRICARE rolls. Rather, he explained, TRICARE becomes the "second payer" for health care, picking up co-payments and deductibles from the primary insurance plan.

Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) Christine S. Hunter, a TRICARE official, cited one initiative already saving money. More beneficiaries are using the lower-cost mail-order pharmacy option to fill prescriptions.

REVIEW YOUR MILITARY RETIREE ACCOUNT STATEMENT

All Military Retirees should review the back of their Military Retiree Account Statement and verify who you have designated as the beneficiary in case you die. It may not be correct. Recently the VA had military retiree personnel information compromised. There are documented cases where the the beneficiary has been changed. It would a travesty if a loved one did not receive the benefit they deserved.

REMARRIAGE HAS IMPACT ON SBP COVERAGE

A retiree who is providing Survivor Benefit Plan coverage for a spouse or a spouse and child will have the monthly coverage cost suspended if those beneficiaries become ineligible for coverage. A spouse loses eligibility on the date of divorce, or death. Children are eligible until age 18, or 22 if a full-time student. Marriage or military service at any age terminates a child's eligibility.

Retirees who remarry and have suspended their spouse-only or spouse and child coverage have the following options:

1. Spouse coverage can resume as before. By law, the new spouse will automatically become the eligible beneficiary at the same level in effect for the previous spouse, adjusted by cost-of-living increases, on the first anniversary date of remarriage, or when a child is born as legal issue of the marriage; however, it is the member's responsibility to notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service of the new marriage to prevent loss of options or premium debt accrual.

Here are the other SBP options after a post-retirement remarriage:

2. Increase coverage (base amount) up to and including full retired pay. If a retiree selects this option, he or she must pay the difference between the SBP costs previously paid and the costs which would have been incurred if the new level of participation had been originally elected, plus interest. Any increase in premiums, with interest, must be paid before the first anniversary of the marriage. Payment of these premiums and interest must be completed before the spouse qualifies as an eligible beneficiary or the election increasing the coverage will be null and void.

3. Elect not to resume the spouse portion of coverage before the date the spouse becomes an eligible beneficiary. Elections under this option are effective upon receipt; however, notification must be received before the date that the spouse becomes an eligible beneficiary or the spouse coverage will automatically be resumed at the level of coverage for the previous spouse plus any cost-of-living increases.

Election of either Option 2 or 3 above must be done before the first anniversary of the remarriage.

If a retiree has divorced and remarries the same spouse for which he or she had previously provided SBP coverage, the coverage and premium deductions become immediately effective, at the same level as the original election.

Notification of intent to select one of the above options must be accomplished by completing a DD Form 2656-6, Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate. This certificate, along with a copy of the marriage certificate, should be mailed or faxed (one or the other method, not both) to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service as soon as possible after remarriage. The mailing address is provided in the instructions on the DD Form 2656-6 and the fax number is 800-469-6559.

Failure to notify DFAS well before the first anniversary will restrict a retiree's options and may result in a debt for SBP premiums to begin accumulating.

For more details, call DFAS at 800-321-1080.

FLAG FACTS

When the Flag is displayed either vertically or horizontally against a wall, balconies or house porches, the star should be placed to the observers left.

When the flag is unfurled for display across a street, it should be hung vertically, with the stars to the north or the east.

When the flag is flown with flags of other nations they are to be displayed from separate staffs of the same height and each should be of equal size.

CLUB FAIRCHILD IS CLOSED

As you may or may not know Club Fairchild closed its door in January of 2009. Many rumors have circulated about the club so COL Michael S. Hill, Commander of the 92d Mission Support Group was contacted and asked for a SITREP on the Club. He was kind enough to respond with the following letter.

Team Fairchild Retirees,

I would like to offer our sincere apologies for most probably not providing adequate, timely information to you and our other Club Members regarding the status of Club Fairchild.

Our Club Fairchild plans changed several times over the last 18 months. As we look back, two key events impacted Club Fairchild. First, we received funds in late FY08 (approximately Sep '09) to renovate the facility and, as a result, we were very optimistic about its renovation. Because the contractor was able to start the renovation in early CY10, we needed to promptly close the doors of Club Fairchild. This required us to temporarily suspend the Club function in late Dec '09.

At about the same time, Fall '09, HQ Air Force selected Fairchild as one of six bases to undergo a "Food Transformation Initiative", i.e., use a food contractor to provide a major portion of food service on base. In conjunction with a Higher Headquarters Team, we explored options for "right-sizing" Club Fairchild, i.e., looking at a facility that would better and more efficiently and economically accommodate a Club function as the existing facility had not proven to be cost effective over the years. During the many months exploring those options and working with the food contractor, Aramark, we have not yet been able to come up with a feasible plan and facility for a Club function.

We are still hopeful, though, that we can be successful. Recently, the Commander, Air Mobility Command, supported our initiative during a visit here. As a result, we are relooking options for a Club function. His support has given us renewed optimism.

In the meantime we have reduced dues, offering 10% off discount to Club Members in all of our FSS activities with a few exceptions. We also continue to provide Club Member benefits in partnership with Aramark at the Final Point Club Annex and with a lounge operation on Friday evenings at the Funspot providing free hors d'oeuvres to Club Members beginning at 4pm. Finally, any military member and retiree and family members can dine at our Warrior Dining Facility, whether a Club Member or not.

Thank you for bringing this important issue to our attention. We will work harder to get the word out to all our members as we work to enhance the club experience here at Fairchild, and as we remain committed to re-starting a Club function.

Very Sincerely,
Mike Hill

Michael S. Hill, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 92d Mission Support Group