



RETIREE



TIMES

A publication of the Vandenberg Air Force Base Retiree Activities Office, 30 SW/CVR 747 Nebraska Ave., Suite A200, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437 Phone : (805) 606-5474

Fall 2001

Vandenberg AFB Calif.

Vol. 1 No. 4

14th Air Force Commander Visits Center



30TH SW PA

Maj. Gen. William R. Looney III, 14th Air Force Commander is welcomed to the Retiree Activities Office by Chief Photographer's Mate John McGraw, U.S. Navy (Retired).

By Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney
30 SW/CVR (Individual Mobilization Augmentee) Retiree Project Officer

On July 26, Major General William R. Looney III, 14th Air Force Commander, and his wife Marilyn enjoyed visiting Vandenberg's Joint Retiree Center and meeting military retirees and widows. I briefed them on the Air Force's Retiree Activities Program and discussed the history of the Retiree Activities Office's revitalization and the creation of the Retiree Center.

The General and his wife toured the center and were not only impressed with the facility, but also with the volunteers

who staff the office. They enjoyed learning more about the retirees and their military backgrounds; also, in talking with the widows and hearing what their husbands had done while serving their country. Maj. Gen. Looney lauded the retirees for their years of service and reminded them of how important they are to the Vandenberg community and the nation.

After hearing of the obstacles and financial struggles that were overcome in establishing the center, Gen. Looney offered some end-of-year funds to upgrade some

computers and obtain the internet service for the retirees' use. When I thanked the General for his generosity to the retirees, he said that he was "happy to help – especially those that work hard helping themselves before asking for help." He has always been a strong supporter of the retirees and that was evidenced last year when he provided welcoming remarks at Retiree Appreciation Day. We all look forward to a return visit so that we can show what we have done with our gift and to express our appreciation.



30TH SW PA

Maj. Gen. William R. Looney III and his wife Marilyn at the Retiree Activities Center.

ALMOST HERE! RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY 2001

By Col. Myrna-Lynne Whitney

30 SW/CVR (Individual Mobilization Augmentee)
Retiree Project Officer

Just want to remind all of you to mark your calendars for Retiree Appreciation Day on **Friday, 16 November**, at the Pacific Coast Club. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the formal program starts at 9:30 a.m. Also, I want to explain some changes that we are facing this year and give you an update on the events as they are unfolding.

The 30th Space Wing Commander's individual invitation letters were mailed out the first week of September. So, all of you should have your letters now and I urge you to **RSVP to the Retiree Center, (805) 606-5474, or to 30th Space Wing Protocol, (805) 606-3711.** Both offices have the mailing lists and are checking folks off as they call in with their reservations.

See Appreciation Page 2



See Club Dues Slashed on Page 3

Appreciation from Page 1

In the past two years, we did not have RSVP for Appreciation Day because it was "first come – first served." However, this year we have two reasons to request that you let us know if you are coming. First, the Pacific Coast Club is planning to serve a hot buffet lunch and needs a headcount for the meal. Second, since we did fill the club last year, we need to know how many will be coming in case we have to work a different seating configuration. Hopefully it won't be necessary to advise people that we have reached capacity.

For those who attended last year, you will remember that we filled the ballroom and we had 600 retirees attend. Throughout this year, we have grown and our mailing list has increased so we may have more attendees; however, with a different table configuration at the club we should be able to accommodate more folks.

Parking: Last year there was insufficient parking at the Club. I am hoping to resolve that problem this year and have arranged to have **parking on the parade ground** and have shuttle bus service to the club. Handicapped parking will be available at the club parking lot.

Cost: At the two previous Appreciation Days, we had complimentary box lunches. However, funding is such that we are unable to continue this practice. Therefore, we will need to charge a nominal amount for the buffet lunch. Since the Retiree Activities Program is an official organization, we are not permitted to solicit donations. However, the Air Force Association has come to our assistance and they are attempting to obtain donations for the meal. Depending upon the amount of money that is raised, the lunch will be from \$4 to \$6 per person. On Nov. 16, we will have registration tables setup at the club and at that

time you will be able to decide if you wish to purchase the lunch and pay for it then. If you do not want to have the buffet, you may have lunch in the dining room or in the base exchange area.

Besides the invitation letters, you will see advertising in other media. Vandenberg "Space and Missile Times" will have a pullout in the Nov. 9 edition. There will be posters in key areas such as the base exchange, commissary, hospital, library, golf course, and other areas on base. We'll even have announcements on the radio stations. We are trying to get the word out and remind folks that this day is for you – retirees and your families.

Major General (ret.) Richard D. Murray, President of National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS), will be one of our guest speakers. Joining General Murray will be Chief Master Sergeant (ret.) Mark Olanoff, National Legislative Director of the Retired Enlisted Association. They will discuss issues concerning TRICARE for Life. Also, we will have local community and base personnel to discuss issues relevant to military retirees. And, just like last year, the base exchange and commissary have special promotional items planned for retirees.

I invite you to visit the Retiree Center as it will be open on Appreciation Day and we will have refreshments available for your enjoyment. Remember – it is **YOUR CENTER** – and I would like you to stop in and see all the improvements that we have made in the past year. We have been very blessed this year with donations from the Chapel, retirees and funding from 14th Air Force Commander Major General Looney, and the 30th Space Wing Commander Colonel Robert Worley.

Looking forward to seeing all of you on November 16th.

30th SW/CC JOINS RETIREEES FOR POTLUCK

By Col Myrna-Lynne

Whitney

30 SW/CVR (Individual Mobilization Augmentee)
Retiree Project Officer

Colonel Robert M. Worley II, 30th Space Wing Commander, joined 50 retirees and widows at our quarterly potluck luncheon on July 19 at the Retiree Center. I briefed on the establishment of the Center and introduced some of the retirees who had given donations to enable us to purchase some special

items. Col. Worley enjoyed talking with individuals about their military affiliations and experiences. He was pleased with the facility and emphasized that the retirees, who had led the way for us all to follow, deserved a place to call their own. Before leaving, Col Worley thanked the retirees for their service and support to the base and community. He mentioned that he would like to return at a later date to



JOHN MCGRAW

Col. Robert M. Worley II chats with retirees at potluck luncheon.

give everyone a Vandenberg mission briefing.

Possessing year-end funds, Col. Worley appropriated money to the Retiree Center to enable the purchase of storage cabinets, software updates, and office supplies. The retirees offer a special "thank you" to Col. Worley for his generosity and his support of the retirees.

Retiree Activities Center

**Building 10364, Base Exchange Area
Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday -
1000 to 1400**

**Closed Saturday, Sunday and Federal
Holidays**

RETIREE TIMES

Col. Robert M. Worley II USAF

Commander 30th Space Wing

Col. Richard Strathearn USAF

Vice Commander 30th Space Wing/RAO Coordinator

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Photographer

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official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

The appearance of advertising in the publication, including any inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, or Lompoc Record Publications, of products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, na-

tional origin, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

Non-advertisement content is compiled from various sources by the Vandenberg Retired Activities Office. Even though reasonable effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the contents, no guarantee of such accuracy is made nor should be assumed. Direct questions on the various topics to the agencies and phone numbers listed in the articles. All

photographs, unless otherwise indicated are RAO or Air Force Photos.

Publication deadlines are the 15th of March, June, September and December. The Retiree Activities Office reserves the right to edit all submissions for style and space. Send submissions to 30SW/CVR, 747 Nebraska Ave., Suite A200, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-1461 or via facsimile to (805) 606-0437. The phone number is (805) 606-5474. Address electronic mail to <retirees.office@vandenberg.af.mil>.

Pharmacy Operation Changes

Beginning Sept. 17, the 30th Medical Group pharmacy began accepting new prescriptions written by civilian health care providers **only** between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. During this period, a pharmacist will provide guidance in accordance with federal, state and Air Force regulations.

All prescriptions, especially those written by off-base health care providers, can present questions on therapeutics, dosages, side effects, and drug interactions that only a pharmacist can answer. Limiting drop-off hours for civilian-written prescriptions is the best way to ensure the base pharmacy provides the highest quality of service to their patrons.

The telephone refill service is another service the base pharmacy provides its customers. It's been around for years. Callers are urged to listen to the recorded messages on the system. The recordings announce upcoming events, closures and information. Remember, patients must have identification to pick up their prescription. If someone other than the patient picks up the refill, he must have an authorization form and the patient's identification card. A front and back photocopy of the ID card is acceptable. (30th Medical Group)

Pacific Coast Club Dues Slashed!

Vandenberg Air Force Base's Pacific Coast Club has gone through some trying times these past few years as they have made attempts to structure a dues system that would not only help keep the club alive but benefit their customers as well. The PCC lost a lot of very important members during the last dues change within the retiree population and wants them back. With the NEW dues structure members will notice a tremendous savings with all the great benefits still there.

With the NEW dues structure members will notice a tremendous savings with all the great benefits still there. "I am convinced reducing the dues is the right thing to do. We are highly motivated to recapture our lost members, especially our valued retirees and widows, and to add even more new members," said Col Robert M. Worley II, 30 Space Wing Commander.

Joining the Pacific Coast Club during the months of September, October, and November not only gets you back to being a member of tradition and heritage but also provides a great opportunity to win some fabulous prizes! The ongoing Air Force Membership Drive sponsored in part by Advantage Rent-A-Car, First USA, and American Airlines is giving away 10 brand new automobiles! FREE dues until February 2002! Zero percent interest for the first three months! Cash! And much more!

The new dues structure is as follows: Retirees \$8, Widows and widowers \$5 per month.

"This is the lowest our dues have been in a long time, as we listened to our retiree population and have made what I feel is a tremendous leap towards capturing not only new members in the retiree community, but those who we lost with the last dues increase." Said Lt. Col David Cannon, 30th Services Squadron Commander. (30th SVS)

JULY



JOHN MCGRAW

Peggy Homer, Senior Researcher from the Blue Jay Research Group in Lompoc, spoke with military retirees and their spouses at the July potluck and meeting in the Joint Retiree Center. She also demonstrated a software program that is used to organize and preserve personal information (i.e. important documents, photos, medical and family history records). Mrs. Homer is an active member of the Central Coast Chapter of the National Society of Military Widows.

AUGUST



JOHN MCGRAW

Tymme Mitchell — writer, motivational speaker, and naturalist — shown here with Col. Whitney, talked with retirees on “Living to 102.” She emphasized the importance of proper nutrition, exercise, and the “powers of positive thoughts” to increase one’s life span.

SEPTEMBER



JOHN MCGRAW

MSgt Richard Norstebon and SSgt Christopher Miller, 30th Security Forces Squadron, briefed retirees and widows on home and travel security at the September meeting. MSgt Norstebon (above right) and SSgt Miller conducted an extensive question and answer period to respond to retirees personal concerns. Retirees appreciated the timeliness of the briefing.

FEHBP Coverage and TRICARE For Life

There are a number of military retirees that have had medical coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) as a result of federal employment subsequent to military service. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued an interim rule that will allow a retiree, annuitant or former spouse to suspend his or her FEHBP coverage to enroll in TRICARE For Life yet subsequently re-enroll in the FEHBP. Under previous regulations, if an enrollee cancelled his or her FEHBP coverage, that cancellation was forever and the retiree could not re-enroll, except if the enrollee cancelled his or her coverage to join a Medicare Plus Choice health maintenance organization (HMO) plan.

The new regulation was drafted in April and but had been held in abeyance pending the

confirmation of President Bush’s nominee for the Director of OPM, Kay Coles James. The interim rule was printed in the federal register on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2001. Following is an excerpt from the federal register:

“SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management is issuing an interim rule to allow TRICARE-eligible FEHB Program annuitants and former spouses to suspend their FEHB enrollments, and then return to the FEHB Program during the Open Season, or return to FEHB coverage immediately, if they involuntarily lose TRICARE coverage. The intent of this rule is to allow TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries to avoid the expense of continuing to pay FEHB Program premiums while they are using TRICARE coverage, without endangering their ability to return to the FEHB Program in the

future. DATES: Effective September 26, 2001. Comments (regarding the interim rule) received on or before November 26, 2001. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael W. Kaszynski, Policy Analyst, Insurance Policy and Information Division, OPM, Room 3425, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415-0001. He can also be reached at (202) 606-0004 or by electronic mail (e-mail) at: mwkaszyn@opm.gov.”

Under this rule, retirees would be allowed to return to FEHB coverage immediately if they involuntarily lose TRICARE coverage or, if not, during the next annual FEHB Open Season. They are also amending regulations to clarify a similar situation involving FEHB-covered annuitants and former spouses. The regulations allow an individual who drops FEHB coverage when he or she enrolls in a Medicare-sponsored plan, or in Medicaid or a similar State-sponsored program of medical assistance for the needy, to return to FEHB coverage during the annual Open Season or immediately upon being involuntarily disenrolled from the non-FEHBP coverage.

The Health Benefit Suspension/Cancellation Confirmation Form RI 79-9 is being revised to include suspending the FEHBP to enroll in Tricare For Life. To receive the form needed to make this change, or for more information about this rulemaking, call the OPM toll free at (888)-767-6738.

Thirty days Means 30-days

The TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program (TSRx) is designed to prescribe pills for longer-term illnesses on a 30-day basis. Your doctor may sometimes write a one month’s prescription for “31 days,” or “31 pills” for a once-a-day pill, when you visit your doctor in a 31-day month, i.e. January, March, May, July, August, October or December. If that happens, and the network pharmacy interprets the prescription literally you will be charged double the co-pay for a thirty-day prescription because the \$3/\$9 covers only a 30-day supply, not a thirty-one day supply. Before you leave the doctor’s office, check your prescriptions and verify that they are written for a thirty-day supply.

Diabetic and Insulin Supplies

Following is a summary of cost shares for diabetic and insulin supplies through the National Mail Order Pharmacy (NMOP) and the TRICARE network pharmacy program. There is no charge for diabetic and insulin supplies obtained from a military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacy.

Diabetic Needles/Syringes:

NMOP/Mail-Order - \$9/90 day supply or 600 syringes and/or needles whichever is less.

TRICARE Network Pharmacy - \$9/30 day supply or 200 syringes and/or needles, whichever is less.

Blood/Urine Test Strips:

NMOP/Mail-Order - \$9/90 day supply or 600 strips, whichever is less.

TRICARE Network Pharmacy - \$9/30 day supply or 200 strips whichever is less.

Note: If blood glucose test strips are ordered, lancets are included, whether ordered or not. Lancets will not be provided by the NMOP unless there is an order for blood glucose test strips.

Insulin:

NMOP/Mail-Order - \$9/90 day supply

TRICARE Network Pharmacy - \$9/30 day supply

For non-network pharmacies, Medicare covers 80 percent of the cost for Medicare beneficiaries after the annual deductible has been met. Therefore, beneficiaries should file with Medicare first and then submit for any out-of-pocket expenses to TRICARE. (www.tricare.osd.mil)

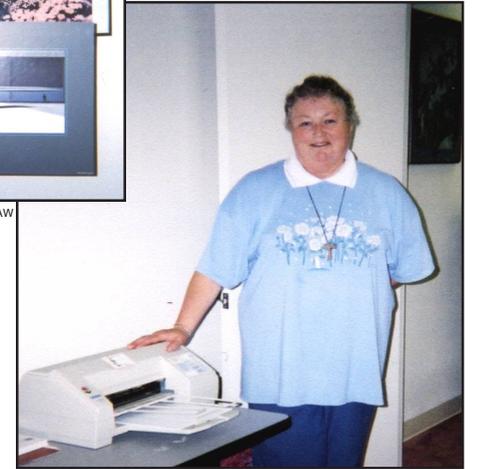
WIDOWS' GENEROSITY

Thanks to the generosity of two members of the National Society of Military Widows (NSMW), Central Coast Chapter 44, Betty Hoffman and Marylou Boyle the Retiree Center now has many new pictures and a color printer. Hoffman, who serves as volunteer at the Center, wanted her late husband's F-16's, Space Shuttle, B-2, and satellite photos to be enjoyed by other retirees so she contributed them to the Center. And, Boyle, who is the Chapter 44 President and a military retiree, gave us a color printer which is being used in the computer room. Boyle is one of the charter members of the Retiree Activities Office.

The NSMW Chapter 44 ladies meet the second Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. in the Retiree Center. They appreciate the facility and have adopted it as their own. Many of the ladies also volunteer and help staff the Center and work on the quarterly potluck luncheons. Thank you, Betty and Marylou, for caring and all your help.



JOHN McGRAW



JOHN McGRAW

ADDS TO RETIREE CENTER

Gulf War Syndrome Update

The Acting Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses, Lt. Gen. Dale A. Vesser, says retirees who believe they are ill from their Gulf War service should seek medical help as soon as possible. Lt. Gen. Vesser, a retired Army general who wrote the official history of the Gulf War, says service members and veterans who think they may have symptoms of Gulf War Illnesses should have their symptoms evaluated.

About 40,000 have been examined by the military's Comprehensive Clinical Evaluation Program (CCEP) and 80,000 through the Veteran's Affairs registry. Ninety percent of those examined were determined to exhibit symptomatic illnesses. Of those examined, 80 percent were medically diagnosed and treated for a specific known illness, while 20 percent remain undiagnosed. The most common symptoms experienced by Gulf War veterans reporting illnesses include tiredness, headaches, joint pains, diarrhea, memory loss, depression, rashes, muscle aches, abdominal pain, hair loss, sleep disturbance and concentration problems.

For more information on CEEP, visit:

<<http://www.cba.ha.osd.mil/projects/fhp/ccep/ccep-main.htm>>.

Also, visit the VA's Gulf Vets Web Page

<<http://www.va.gov/health/envIRON/persgulf.htm>> or call the VA's

Gulf War Veterans Information Help line at (800) PGW-VETS.

The Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses released several new reports that can be accessed at

<<http://www.gulfink.osd.mil>>. If you would like to comment on

any of these reports, call (800) 497-6261 or email Lt. Gen. Vesser

at <assistant@gwillness.osd.mil>. (Wuebold)

H.R. 801 Signed into Law

The Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001 (H.R.801, as amended) was signed into law by President George W. Bush on June 5th as the Veterans' Survivor Benefits Improvements Act of 2001, Public Law 107-14. The bill, which was introduced by Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.):

1) Expands health under CHAMPVA for survivors of veterans who die of a service-connected disability. CHAMPVA beneficiaries who are Medicare-eligible would receive coverage similar to the "TRICARE for Life." Future Medicare-eligible CHAMPVA beneficiaries would be required to obtain Medicare Part B coverage as a pre-condition to eligibility for this new benefit; coverage would be automatic for CHAMPVA beneficiaries who are eligible for Medicare

on the date of enactment. 2) Expands the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program to include spouses and children. Spousal coverage could not exceed \$100,000; child coverage could not exceed \$10,000. Upon termination of SGLI, the spouse's policy could be converted to a private life insurance policy. The law also makes increases in life insurance coverage (new \$250,000 maximum) retroactive to cover service members killed in Yemen aboard the U.S.S. Cole in 2000. (FRA/House website)

WEB SITES MAY BE UNAVAILABLE

The Code Red virus, and others, will cause some military and government web sites to be unavailable from time to time to other than non ".mil" addresses. Perhaps the most important web site to retired military personnel seeking information on TRICARE is the web site <<http://www.tricare.osd.mil>>.

Retirees may find it not available to them because they have a non ".mil" addressees. This non-availability is due to security precautions taken to protect the site from viruses. If you're unable to access the TRICARE web site, try using the web site for the contractor or try again in a day or two.

TRICARE Golden Gate Service area Northern California and TRICARE Southern California Service area: Southern California and Yuma, Ariz.

Foundation Health Federal Services, Call toll-free (800)242-6788 or visit <http://www.fhfs.com/shared/select_region.asp?action3DChangeRegion&ps3Dbb>

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (administered by Delta Dental, Sacramento, CA) Call toll free (888)838-8737, Web site: <<http://www.ddpdelta.org/retiree/retirees.html>> (Max Facts)

Club Advisory Council

Retirees were represented by Lt. Col. Wray Stitch, USAF (Ret.) at the Pacific Coast Club Advisory Council meeting on Sept 27. It was announced that dues for retirees and surviving spouses would be reduced as of Oct. 1, 2001 as well as dues reductions for active duty military members.

Retirees (All Ranks) \$8.00 per month, Widows and Widowers \$5.00 per month.

This is good news for the retirees and will be part of the membership drive now ongoing. The membership drive now in progress will feature a "Membership Appreciation Night" which will have live entertainment, free dinner buffet, door prizes to include cash, gift certificates, and a grand prize of one year free dues (paid in the form of a credit to the member's account). For you retirees the club is also "your club" and your support will be greatly appreciated by Team Vandenberg.

Commissary Web Site

You can now visit the commissary by "surfing" there thanks to the Defense Commissary Agency's (DeCA) Web site. On the Web site, you can find out what is on sale at the commissary of your choice and make up your own shopping list. Air Force Print News reports that each commissary maintains its own page on the Web site, which features local information ranging from store hours and store specialty services to dates of the next case lot sale. Another new feature is the "what's new" section where visitors find the latest news and information. Web site visitors can also send their ideas and requests by clicking on the "contact DeCA" button. For more information on all commissaries, visit the DeCA Web site at <http://www.commissaries.com/>. (Lt.Col.Wuebold)

COMPUTER TRAINING AVAILABLE

Need to learn how to use that new computer? Have computer questions that need answers? Come into the Retiree Activities Center on **Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.** and talk with Chuck Brown, an RAO volunteer. Or, **by appointment, on Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.** with Roy Stovall, an RAO volunteer. There are six computers and two printers ready for your use. For more details and to register for training, please come into the Retiree Center, opposite the Four Seasons Store in the Base Exchange area, or telephone (805) 606-5474.

MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

2001/2002

The **third Thursday** of each month at 1 p.m. in the Retiree Center, Building 10364 – Base Exchange area, across from the Four Seasons store – retirees gather to hear guest speakers, socialize, and enjoy cookies and coffee. **Quarterly** there is a potluck luncheon that begins at 1200. The schedule is as follows:

2001

***Nov. 16 — Friday – RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY — Pacific Coast Club**
8:30 a.m. registration; 9:30 a.m. program begins

***Dec. 13 – Thursday — HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON – Retiree Center**

2002

Jan. 17 – Estate Conservation – Mr. Altheide, VAFB Federal Credit Union

Feb. 21 – Federal/State Tax Preparation – 30 SW Judge Advocates Office

Mar. 21 – Potluck at 1200. Meeting at 1300. Dental Program – Steve Morgan,
Delta Federal Services

Apr. 18 – Identity Theft/Credit Card Scams – Mrs. Van Sickle, VAFB Federal
Credit Union

May 16 – Vandenberg Base Clinic – Col. Whit Campbell, 30th Medical Group Commander

Jun. 20 – Potluck at 1200. Meeting at 1300. Eye Care – Dr. Zarnegar –
Shepard Eye Center

Jul. 18 – Exercise for Seniors – Tyson Grier – Vandenberg Wellness Center

Aug. 15 – Emergency Healthcare – Paramedics

Sep. 19 – Potluck at 1200. Meeting at 1300. Casualty Affairs – Sheila Kaplan
– 30th Mission Support Squadron

Oct. 17 – Convalescent Care – Speaker to be determined.

***November – Retiree Appreciation Day – Date to be determined.**

***Dec. 12 – Thursday – HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON**

*Denotes different date than 3rd Thursday of the month and for Appreciation Day
different location.

VA Raises VGLI

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is a program of post-separation insurance that provides for the conversion of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) to 5-year renewable term insurance. Military members leaving the service with government life insurance coverage at a new higher limit now will be able to continue coverage at that level after retirement.

A Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) press release reports that a change in law allows service members to buy up to \$250,000 in government life insurance coverage while in the military, up from the previous limit of \$200,000. Newly-retired members can now have a policy under the VGLI program at the same higher ceiling, but only if they had that top level while in uniform. The VA supervises both VGLI for retirees and SGLI program for active duty military members.

This change generally does not affect existing VGLI policyholders because the maximum coverage permitted under VGLI is limited to the amount the service member had under SGLI when he or she separated from active duty or the reserves. Veterans generally must choose VGLI coverage within 120 days of discharge, although with evidence of good health that

signup period may be extended another year. Rules are more liberal for military members who are totally disabled at the time of separation.

To obtain VGLI, retirees who believe themselves to still be eligible, must submit an application to the Office of Servicemembers Group Life Insurance with the required premium. VGLI is issued in multiples of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$250,000 but not for more than the amount of SGLI the member had in force at the time of separation from service. VGLI is convertible at any time to an individual commercial life insurance policy with any participating commercial insurance companies.

Note that the retiree has a maximum of 1 year and 120 days following release from active duty to apply for VGLI. More information is available by calling the VA at (800) 669-8477 or visiting the website at <http://www.insurance.gov>.

To contact the SGLI administrator directly, write:
Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (OSGLI)
213 Washington Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07102-2999 or toll free telephone: (800) 419-1473
E-mail: osgli.osgli@prudential.com
Fax: (973) 643-8723
(Lt. Col. Wuebold/VA web site)

Veterans Commemorative Stamp Unveiled

On 23 May, on the National Mall in the shadow of the Capitol, the U.S. Postal Service issued the new Honoring Veterans Commemorative Stamp.

TRIPS, TOURS AND CRUISES

Vandenberg Leisure Tours is in Building 10122, the Services Center, located near the corner of California Blvd. and Washington Ave. It offers a wide variety of excursions to suit every taste. In addition, the tour office lists favorable rates at hotels and motels in the vicinity of Southern California theme parks and Los Angeles Airport. Active duty, retired military, and civil service personnel, government contractors, families, and guests are eligible to participate. The office publishes the "Tripletter" listing upcoming events. You can learn more about opportunities by calling (805) 606-7976 and asking to be placed on the mailing list. The address is P.O. Box 5459, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-0459. You might also visit their new website at www.vandenberg-leisure-tours.org. For complete information on the following upcoming trips, contact the tour office.

Oct 28-31	Laughlin, \$79 per person sharing, single add \$25
Nov 1	Lion King, \$110
Nov 3	Getty Museum, \$35
Nov 9-11	San Francisco, \$240 per person sharing
Nov 18-25	Branson, \$1,579 per person sharing, single add \$400
Nov 23	Christmas Shopping, Camarillo, \$35
Nov 28-Dec 4	"An Italian Holiday in Tuscany," \$1,479 per person sharing, single add \$300
Dec 6	Disneyland/California Adventure, transportation \$35
Dec 8	Crystal Cathedral, \$65 includes balcony seat
Dec 9-12	Las Vegas Fremont Street, \$98, single add \$40
Dec 15	The Nutcracker, \$109
Dec 27	Aida at Ahmanson Theatre, \$98
Jan 1	Rose Parade, \$98 grandstand seats
Jan 10-24	New Zealand/Australia Cruise
Feb 9	Riverdance at Pasadena Playhouse, \$98

(Tripletter)

RAO WEB SITE ON-LINE!

As promised, you are now able to find out about the Retiree Center by logging on to the internet at: <http://www.vafb.af.mil/30sw/organizations/index.html>. Once there, click on "Staff Agencies," then click on "Retiree Activities Center." Or you can simply log on to: <http://www.vafb.af.mil> and click on "Site Index" in the lower right corner of the screen to find the Retiree Activities Center. You will be able to read "The Retiree Times;" see our facility and some of our staff members; obtain information about upcoming events; and learn more about the National Society of Military Widows.

GAME DAY at the RETIREE CENTER!

Bridge? Cribbage? Checkers? Chess? What do you like to play? What do you know how to play? Do you want to help others learn? Bridge partners needed. Come to the Retiree Activities Center **every Wednesday** to join your fellow retirees for some fun times. Ask your friends to join you for some good old-fashioned companionship and some refreshments, come and enjoy **GAME DAY**. This is your Center, come in and use it.

FORGOTTEN WIDOWS PROGRAM

To date more than 800 applications have been received by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) from widows applying for the Annuity for Certain Military Surviving Spouses (ACMSS). Nearly 550 have been approved and these widows are now receiving the \$180.88 monthly annuity. The ACMSS is an ongoing program and efforts continue to get the word to all surviving spouses who may be eligible for the annuity. Eligibility criteria remains the same. For spouses of active duty retirees - member must have retired before Sep. 21, 1972, and died

prior to Mar. 21, 1974. For spouses of reserve retirees, the member must have retired and died prior to Oct. 1, 1978. In addition, applicants must not have remarried or be receiving any other military survivor annuity. If approved, an annuity will be paid retroactive to December 1997 for active duty spouses and to October 1999 for reserve spouses. Regardless of service affiliation, if you believe someone you know is eligible, please contact Frank Viser at (800) 531-7502 for further information and to obtain an application.

Cold War Certificates

If you served on active duty, as a DoD employee, or in the national guard or reserves from Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991, you are authorized to receive a Cold War Recognition Certificate.

To obtain one you must:

- 1) Provide proof of service, such as a DD 214 (send a copy, no originals).
- 2) Write and sign a letter requesting the award of a Cold War Recognition Certificate.
- 3) Submit the letter and your proof of service to CDR, Perscom

Cold War Recognition, Hoffman II

Attn: TAPC-CWRS, 3n45

200 Stovall St.

Alexandria, VA 22332-0473

Or fax to 1-800-723-9262.

Expect to wait six months for the certificate.

Retirees Activities Office

30 SW/CVR

747 Nebraska Ave. Suite A-200

Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-6261

Official Business

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Address Corrections

The mailing list for this newsletter is maintained by the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) based on input from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DEERS) and other sources as well as input directly from addressees. Please make any corrections necessary on the label above, clip and return to the RAO. In the event the retiree is deceased, indicate date and given name of surviving spouse. We want to continue to send the newsletter to the widow/widower. The mailing address of the RAO is shown above. You may also send e-mail to: retirees.office@vandenberg.af.mil.