



AFSA Chapter 567 Legislative Bulletin 2011-003
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AFSA HEADQUARTERS HAPPENINGS

INTERMENT OF PAST AFSA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT ELMER R. ANDREWS

Last Friday, Past International President, CMSgt Elmer R. Andrews was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. He was interred in Section 68, Space 31 along with his former wife Audrey Andrews (Past International Aux President). President Andrews was extremely active with AFSA until his recent passing and he attended every AFSA International Convention/Conference.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND NEWS

PROPOSED BILL TO ALLOW PENTAGON TO INCREASE TRICARE PRIME FEES

On May 4 the House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee rejected DoD's plans to raise TRICARE Prime enrollment fees 13 percent and approved a 1.6 percent across-the-board pay raise for active duty personnel in FY 2012.

Initially, AFSA applauded both moves but our elation was short-lived. Early this week the Chairman of the House Armed Services, Rep. Buck McKeon (D-CA), stripped provisions in the draft bill that prohibit higher TRICARE fees and inserted his own language allowing fees to rise by 13 percent in FY 2012, and by the rate of the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) every year thereafter.

The Chairman's bill WAS marked up (considered) by the House Armed Services Committee and now it will go to the full House for their action. Military retirees stand to lose millions in additional out-of-pocket expenses if the House agrees to the Plan.

AFSA remains firm in the belief that fee increases are not appropriate at this time. Stay tuned for further information regarding this issue

VETERAN NEWS

If you are Veteran in crisis or know of one who is, please call our 24/7 Veterans Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255 and push '1' for Veterans to speak with our trained counselors, or find a Crisis Center near you.

FAMILY "CAREGIVERS" APPLICATION PROCESS OPENS

"We at The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) know that every day is a challenge for our most seriously injured Veterans and their Family Caregivers," said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. "I know many Veterans and their Family Caregivers have been waiting anxiously for this day and I urge them to get their applications in as soon as possible so they can receive the additional support they have earned."

On May 9, staff in VA's Office of Care Management and Social Work opened the application process for eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers to designate their Family Caregivers.

FAMILY CAREGIVERS RECEIVE TRAINING

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Easter Seals formally announced a partnership to provide comprehensive Caregiver Training to Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans as authorized by the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010.

"We at VA are committed to providing the Family Caregivers who share our sacred duty to care for those 'who have borne the battle' with the best services available," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We are very pleased to partner with a renowned organization such as Easter Seals in developing the best possible training program for Family Caregivers. Throughout its long history, Easter Seals has demonstrated its strong commitment to supporting our Nation's Military, Veterans and their families."

"Easter Seals is proud to share our expertise and knowledge with this important group of Family Caregivers, taking care of loved ones who returned home with serious injuries after their post 9/11 service to our nation," explained James E. Williams, Jr., President and CEO of Easter Seals. "We are honored to help these Veterans and their families."

Veterans may download a copy of the Family Caregiver program application at www.caregiver.va.gov. Caregiver support coordinators are stationed at 153 VA medical centers and available by phone at 1-877-222-8387, to assist Veterans and Family Caregivers with the application process. Caregivers of Veterans from all eras are also encouraged to use the website and support line to explore more than two dozen other services VA provides Caregivers.

Source: Department of Veterans Affairs

AROUND OUR NATION

HELPFUL HINTS FROM TRICARE

TRICARE has a news update to bring you important information to beneficiaries utilizing TRICARE. TRICARE Coverage for Young Adults (TYA) is mentioned in this publication and if you were not aware – TYA allows TRICARE to extend coverage to eligible dependent children until reaching age 26. If you are considering purchasing this coverage that would be retroactive back to January 1, 2011, you can do so, but remember – the opportunity to purchase this retroactive coverage expires September 1, 2011.

Sign up and receive an update from TRICARE in your inbox.

http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmartfiles/Prod_729/BW_News_i3_2011_LoRes.pdf

WE ARE LISTENING

We have been reminded by fellow members, that what you may hear out in the field – may not be what is happening up here close to the Hill.

As we have reported and is documented in our testimony last month, AFSA has opposed TRICARE fee increases. This is also stated in the Air Force Times, May 9th addition, among other Military Coalition (TMC) organizations, stating that “the Air Force Sergeants Association has been one of the most vocal military-related groups opposed to any TRICARE fee increases”.

However, one of our members has heard otherwise -

“This isn’t how I heard it went down. Only the NAUS stood the ground and other TMC gave way to “it is going to happen.” This is not the way I want to be represented. We retirees were promised “free” health care for life, period. I was a career retention NCO and counseled airmen and NCOs about this specific benefit, as well as receiving this knowledge for 24 years from supervisors, first sergeants, commanders, etc. I don’t want to hear this crap of unauthorized promises – they knew it was going on, they used it to the betterment of reenlistment and benefited by it. Step up and do what is right, and I expect you to accept NOTHING LESS.”

We have hit Congress to support H.R. 1092 “Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act” to prohibit certain increases in fees for military healthcare.

This piece of important legislation was introduced recently by Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-NC). With only nine co-sponsors, we have work to do to pass this one.

AFSA suggests contacting your Congressman and ask them to be a co-sponsor and help get this one to the table. For a sample of the letter form, please visit our website for suggestions www.hqafsa.org

The Capitol Hill operator @ 1-888-762-8760 is an excellent way to voice your concerns to your elected officials.

AFSA MEMBER BENEFITS

DID YOU KNOW

Membership with the AFSA has never been more important and renewing your membership is even easier. AFSA International Headquarters is pleased to announce that the Auto Deduct/Auto Renewal Application is posted on the AFSA Website under Resource -- Membership Docs. All new and current members interested in enrolling in the Auto Deduct/Auto Renewal Program should print and complete the application, sign it and mail the completed/signed application to the AFSA International Headquarters at 5211 Auth Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746.

APPLE SYSTEMS

Thinking about buying a Mac, iPod, or iPhone? Shop through the AFSA partnered website [HERE](#), or call (800) MY-APPLE (be sure to request your AFSA member discount when calling Apple).

AIR FORCE TIMES: AFSA SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNT

Don't miss this special subscription offer! Order the Air Force Times at \$39.95 for the year. A savings of 76% off the cover price, and the Air Force Times will send \$5 to AFSA on your behalf -- and send to you – TWO FREE GIFTS! Order online [HERE](#) or call (800) 368-5718. (Please advise the AF Times that you are an AFSA member).

AFSA NEW MEMBER TERM LIFE INSURANCE BENEFIT

New AFSA members under the age of 40 receive \$10,000 of Term Life Insurance provided at no-cost for 12 months. For more information click [HERE](#) or call Marsh Affinity Group Services toll-free at (800) 882-5541.

RESUME OF CANDIDATE FOR ELECTED OFFICE

IAW AFSA Manual 100-2, Policies and Procedures, October 1, 2010, AFSA Headquarters needs your properly prepared "Resume of Candidate for Elected Office," not less than fifteen (15) days before the International Convention's convening date. Additional lead-time would be most helpful to allow AFSA International Headquarters time to print the candidate's portfolio for the general membership attending the international convention. For printing purposes, HQ request all "Resume of Candidate for Elected Office" be submitted NLT 23 June 2011.

USAA CREDIT CARDS AVAILABLE ONLINE

AFSA members can now apply for special AFSA Logo credit cards. Visit the website and take advantage of the many offers from USAA, www.usaa.com. Also, see your Sergeants Magazine for a full page advertisement.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN - DEADLINE JUNE 20TH

The 2011 Professional Airmen's Conference will convene in San Antonio, Texas (the birthplace of the AFSA's National / International Convention in 1964), at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio, 600 East Market Street, San Antonio, Texas, 78205.

You may register via the AFSA website www.hqafsa.org under the Event Tab -- 2011 PAC or you may call the Member and Field Relations Directorate and the HQ Staff will assist you via the phone.

Don't forget to make your Grand Hyatt Hotel reservations. The deadline for making your hotel reservation at the AFSA contracted room rates is June 20, 2011. **You may find a link to the Grand Hyatt also under the Event Tab -- 2011 PAC.**

NOTE: The AFSA contracted room rate of \$106.00 is guaranteed beginning July 23, through Wednesday night, July 27, 2011. If you are planning to arrive before July 23, or stay after July 27, 2011, AFSA can not guarantee contracted room rates and you must CALL the Grand Hyatt reservation line to make your reservations 1-800-233-1234.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The success of each is dependent upon the success of the other.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

AFSA- Your Global Voice for Fifty Years