



JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK RETIREE BULLETIN



VOLUME 1

MAY 2009

A LETTER FROM YOUR RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Dear Service Retirees and Spouses:

Another year has passed since I have had the opportunity to update each of you on Retiree Council activities. As I address you, I am hopeful the current economic crisis will turn around and not negatively affect military Retirees. We must actively pursue contacting political entities to voice our support for funding TRICARE for Life with no increase in cost to Retirees. A special thanks to all who contributed and supported the Retiree Appreciation Day by being a participant. We had a record attendance and a well planned program of activities for our military Retirees.

Another council member, SGM (R) Anthony L. Barattini passed away in December 2008. He was an active member of the council for six years.

Many things were accomplished by the Retiree Council during the year. A forum was conducted on January 22, 2009 hosted by Mrs. Charlotte Mixon, the Installation Customer Service Representative to address issues of important concern to Retirees that come to Fort Polk as well as other military installations frequented by Retirees. At the conclusion of the forum, the

group presented the information of concerns to the Post Commander's representative for appropriate action.

This year's 34th Annual Retiree Appreciation Day will be hosted by the JRTC and Fort Polk on October 24, 2009. This day is to recognize the importance of our military Retirees and their families. Your council will review the activity schedule to ensure the resources available at JRTC and Fort Polk, concerning benefits and services, will be on site to assist you.

We, of the Retired military community, should continue to make a difference at all levels of business and government in the areas we reside.

“Retired Still Serving.”

Harry J. Montgomery
Colonel, AUS (Retired)
Chairman, Fort Polk Retiree Council

JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK WEBSITE

Visit the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Website at <http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil> and learn more about available installation services and activities. On this home page you will find a special link to Retirement Services that will provide the latest information on Retiree benefits and services.

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE:

**FORT POLK AAFES MAIN STORE BREAKS GROUND
INTERIM COMMISSARY TO SERVE NEW ORLEANS AREA
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CARE TO VETERANS
THREE NEW COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS**

2009 RETIREE COUNCIL

COL(R) MONTGOMERY, Harry J., Sulphur, LA
COL(R) THOMPSON, Ronald, Baton Rouge, LA
LTC(R) GRIFFITH, Lessie A., DeRidder, LA
LTC(R) GIBSON, Stephen C., Shreveport, LA
MAJ(R) BREWER, Alvie, Ruston, LA
MAJ(R) SAUCIER, Charles E., Alexandria, LA
CW5(R) LEBLANC, Mervin J., Plaquemine, LA
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CSM(R) HENDERSON, Carl C., Metairie, LA
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MSG(R) CLARK, Lathern P., Bossier City, LA
MSG(R) BURRELL, George, Bossier City, LA
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SFC(R) HUMPHRIES, Stephen D., Leesville, LA
SFC(R) WILLIAMS, Lovelace, Port Arthur, TX
SFC(R) SHELTON, T.J., Jasper, TX

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COL(R) ORPHE, Wilson, Lake Charles, LA
COL(R) TUCKER, Thomas A., Baton Rouge, LA
LTC(R) GILES, Jimmie, Shreveport, LA
LTC(R) MILLER, Richard W., Shreveport, LA
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CSM(R) MYRICK, James C., Leesville, LA
CSM(R) POTTER, Bobby G., Waskom, TX
CSM(R) WARE, Vernon, Oakdale, LA
CSM(R) WHERLE, Greg, Leesville, LA
1SG(R) DEKARSKE, Don, Anacoco, LA
1SG(R) ESQUIVEL, Daniel J., Donaldsonville, LA
MSG(R) OTTS, Ancil, Baton Rouge, LA
SFC(R) DIXON, Harold, Colfax, LA
CPO(R) VINCENT, Robert, Crowley, LA
BM1(R) CLARK, Glenn C., Goodrich, TX

AAFES MAIN STORE SHOPPING COMPLEX

AAFES broke ground on December 19, 2008 on a new \$21 million dollar Main Store Shopping Center complex. The new facility will be 131,000 square feet, an increase of 50,000 square feet over the old facility. Included in the project will be: Military Clothing moving into

the mall area, the furniture store moving into the main store, five food concepts, eight concession operations, and a Starbucks. Construction is scheduled to be completed in May 2010.

ARMY CAREER AND ALUMNI PROGRAM (ACAP) RETIREE SERVICES

Did you know that regardless of your length of service, as a Retiree of the Army you have lifetime eligibility to use ACAP services? Army Retirees and their Family members can access ACAP services on a space available basis for life. Also, if you are a Retiree of one of the other Uniformed Services you can access ACAP services up to 180 days following retirement.

To be considered as a Retired Service member (AC or RC) you must have a current ID card indicating Retired status. Family members of Retirees, who desire to use ACAP services, also must have a current ID card that indicates their Retiree status.

Services offered at the ACAP Center include, but are not limited to, resume writing, seminars, one-on-one assistance provided by a professional, and assistance with job search. For information about available services call (337) 531-1594.

ID CARDS/DEERS

Two valid unexpired forms of ID are required for ID Card issuance or replacement. Age 65 Retirees and spouses are required to come in with their Medicare card to receive new ID cards reflecting the TRICARE for Life eligibility. Indefinite cards can be issued for eligible dependents over the age of 75 and ID cards can be processed via certified mail for those who qualify for this service.

The ID Card Section is located at 2030 14th Street, in Building 1830. Hours of operation are: Monday through Friday from 0730 to 1600. Please ensure that you have all supporting

documents for changes that are made in DEERS. If you are traveling from a long distance or you are from out of state, please call beforehand if you have questions, to confirm required documentation, and to ensure the system is operational. The telephone numbers for information and/or assistance are (337) 531-1891/1430.

FAMILY AND MORALE, WELFARE, AND RECREATION (FMWR)

There's never enough room to completely cover the world of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Log on and visit fortpolkmwr.com for all the latest. You'll find lively, up to date information, calendars, artist biographies, and more.

If you haven't been to Toledo Bend lately, the weather is perfect for an easy getaway. At your very own Toledo Bend Recreation Site, you may rent one of our two bedroom mobile homes or one of our cabins, one of which is handicapped-accessible. There are even a couple of family "yurts". A yurt lets you camp in style: it's a climate controlled, round tent like they use in Mongolia! The site has been recently cleared and the views are better than ever. A covered fishing dock has been added and it is also wheelchair accessible. You can island hop or find your own beach in one of our boats, which range in size from kayaks to pontoon barges big enough for the whole family. You'll need an approved boater safety card to rent one of our boats. If you already have a boat, you can store it on site in our sheltered and secured boat storage lots. For more information call 1 (888) 718-9088.

Mulligan's Bar and Grill is the perfect place to kick back with your friends and enjoy one of our huge sandwiches. The bar and grill is right next to the golf pro shop at Warrior Hills. You can even enjoy your meal on our covered deck overlooking the driving range. Among the favorites are the famous New Orleans Muffaletta, the Luziana Lagniappe, and the Italian Po-boy.

Joining these stalwarts of the deli are brand new sandwich selections such as the Reuben, chicken cordon bleu, Philly, Cajun Philly, and classic burgers all available as combos. If you're just looking for a quick bite, try the nachos, chicken strips, or hot wings. The manager's lunch specials include a schnitzel platter on Tuesday and a catfish platter on Friday. Open weekdays for lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Idle Hour Manager's Specials are offered Tuesday and Thursday from 5-7p.m. and 8-10 p.m. It is also open on weekends. The phone number is (337) 531-6778.

Get fit! As a Retiree, you not only have access to the area's best-equipped fitness centers at Wheelock-Bayou Fitness Center, but you can take many life enriching classes, some of which are free! Most others are only \$2. Some of the current offerings include: aerobics, spinning, abs, martial arts, yoga, body sculpting, salsa, belly dance, and more.

The 50 Meter Pool has reopened. The bubble is up, the water is warm and all the upgrades are done. Regular hours are 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays Tuesday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday hours are noon to 7 p.m. The pool is closed on Monday, but is open for most holidays. Summer hours typically begin Memorial Day Weekend. Free water aerobics classes are offered Tuesday and Thursday at 5 pm. and Wednesday at 10 a.m. This is a great low-impact workout. Call (337) 531-1988 for more information. The pool is located just east of the hospital at Bldg. 273 on Swimming Pool Road.

Warrior Hills Golf Course offers the most affordable golf in the region: 18 holes with golf cart for 18 bucks! This isn't one of those weekday-only specials. This amazing combo is available to Retirees seven days a week. If you haven't teed it up at Warrior Hills lately, you'll be cruising in one of our modern electric carts and enjoying the landscaping and green. Call (337) 531-1982 for more information.

This year's US Army Soldier Show is scheduled for June 10 and 11 and will be hosted at the AAFES Theater on Mississippi Avenue near the junction of Bell Richard.

Clint Black will head the entertainment at the 4th of July Freedom Fest. Also on tap will be the area's largest fireworks show, many food vendors from across the region, and lots of things for the kids to do.

BAYNE-JONES ARMY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL (BJACH) MODERNIZES CENTRAL APPOINTMENT LINE

BJACHs' Central Appointment Line calls will be answered within 90 seconds by a person, not a recording, thanks to a new modernized queuing system. The hospital's goal is to reduce the amount of time required for beneficiaries to get an appointment and to improve first call resolution. Once a call is answered, the caller will be asked how they can be helped. For a routine appointment, booking clerks will check appointment availability. If no appointments are available, the beneficiary will be transferred to a Clinical Support Division clerk, who will contact a TRICARE physician's office and attempt to schedule an appointment for them within the network.

Unfortunately once a beneficiary is referred outside BJACH, they are subject to that physician's schedule. However, the goal is to have a scheduled appointment or referral before the caller hangs up the telephone. Beneficiaries needing an urgent care appointment will be connected with a Triage Nurse, who will access the patient's problem to determine what needs to be done. Patients calling for prescription renewals will be sent to a clinic LPN who will coordinate a telephone consult with the patient's provider.

The physician will then decide the patient's best course of treatment. Once this decision is made, the clinic LPN will contact the patient with

further instructions. To help expedite service, beneficiaries calling the appointment line need to have the following information readily available: Sponsor's Social Security Number and the nature of their problem. If they are requesting a prescription renewal, patient's need the prescription bottle with the prescription number.

BJACH's Central Appointment Line is open for business weekdays from 7:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To reach the appointment line, please call (337) 531-3011. As with all new systems, there will be glitches and bugs, advised from hospital officials. Beneficiaries are asked to be patient and report any major problems directly to Patient Advocacy at (337) 531-3628/3880, so that they can be resolved in a timely manner.

INTERIM COMMISSARY TO SERVE NEW ORLEANS AREA

The Defense Commissary Agency opened an interim store at Naval Support Activity New Orleans (Algiers) on March 31 as a temporary facility until construction is completed on a new joint commissary and Navy exchange facility at the nearby Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans (Belle Chasse).

The interim store is smaller than the existing commissary, which averaged more than 14,000 customers monthly. Customers will find practically the same items to buy, but the store does not have a deli or self-checkouts.

Construction on the new commissary at NAS JRB New Orleans is expected to be completed by summer 2010. Collocated with a new 60,000 square foot exchange, the new commissary will be 50,000 square feet and will include a deli-bakery and self checkouts. The goal is to make the interim commissary worth the trip for customers as well as DECA employees during the next 18 months or so until the new store is opened.

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS (LDVA)
CONTINUES TO MAKE STRIDES IN
VETERANS' CARE**

Secretary Lane Carson of the LDVA is proud of the notable efforts and successes the state department has made toward serving Louisiana's 300,000 plus Veterans and their families since he was appointed to Governor Jindal's cabinet in January of 2008. Since Secretary Carson took office, the department has grown in leaps and bounds in the areas of Veterans outreach and public information.

Secretary Carson said, "LDVA has no interest in flying under the radar. We are a cabinet level agency on a mission to serve over 25% of Louisiana's population – our Veterans and their families. As the number of Veterans in Louisiana continues to increase, our level of service must increase in kind. That is precisely why we have taken measures to reach out to the Veterans of our state, make them aware of the benefits they have earned through their service to our nation, and connect them with a host of state and local services intended to ease their burdens - financial and otherwise."

While the department is best known for providing quality care to disabled Veterans in the state's five war Veterans homes, the mission of the department is ever-expanding and has, under Secretary Carson's direction, involved two major additions to a bustling staff - a Veterans outreach coordinator and a full-time press secretary. Over the past several months, the department has organized a myriad of programs aimed at reaching and serving various segments of the state's Veteran population - women, homeless, unemployed, OIF/OEF, etc.

Participating in social networks such as MySpace and Facebook allows for reaching a large portion of the population and effectively communicating pertinent news to a vast

audience of interested "friends" of the department.

The department has offices in 54 parishes statewide. The offices boast a combined total of 200,000 plus contacts and 100,000 plus claims filed annually. Louisiana ranks in the top 15 states with regard to benefits awarded to disabled Veterans. Because each parish is responsible for providing a location and 25% of service officer's salary for each parish service office, Secretary Carson's hands are tied to a great extent where adding service officers is concerned.

The Legislative Auditor's critique of LDVA also disparaged the department for the lack of a comprehensive database tracking Louisiana's 300,000 Veterans and their dependents. Secretary Carson said, "With well over 300,000 Veterans in the state and hundreds of thousands of connected dependents, at a time when the Veteran population is on the rise with Veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terrorism, our 52 service offices are hard pressed to find every Veteran - particularly those who do not need or want our services at present. We certainly welcome any constructive recommendations that stand to improve the caliber of service we provide and the quality of life for Louisiana Veterans."

**LA MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE
FUND PROVIDES ECONOMIC RELIEF
TO SOLDIERS**

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) Secretary Lane Carson reports continued strides toward aiding Louisiana's Military Families through LDVA's Louisiana Military Family Assistance (MFA) Fund, a special program geared toward helping alleviate financial strain placed on Military Families when National Guard and Reserve Soldiers are deployed and faced with taking leave of their Families and their civilian jobs.

The MFA Fund was established in 2005 by Act 151 of the Legislature, which was authored by Senator Reggie P. Dupre, Jr. The fund was wholly entrusted to LDVA in August of 2008 and was presented to the people of Louisiana as a means of providing voluntary financial support to Families of active Louisiana military personnel - Families experiencing increased financial need as Soldiers are focused on the significant task of protecting precious rights and freedoms. Citizens and businesses can make tax deductible donations to be used solely as provided for by Act 151 by checking the appropriate box on their state tax returns. Donations may also be made by mailing checks payable to LA MFA Fund to LDVA at P.O. Box 94095, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095. For more information, please call (225) 922-0500, ext. 214.

LDVA Secretary Lane Carson said, “The astounding bravery exhibited by Louisiana men and women serving in the National Guard and Reserve - standing by a choice to risk their lives in defense of freedom - must be rewarded. Citizen Soldiers must know that their fellow Louisianans applaud their efforts and stand ready to assist in any way possible. Those who deploy have enough pressure without worrying about leaving their families to suffer undue financial hardship. LDVA is thrilled, as always, to be a part of offering relief to our valiant military men and women and the families that support them.”

Currently deployed Guardsmen and Reservists having served a minimum of 30 consecutive days of active duty following September 11, 2001 and their immediate Family members may apply for assistance. The fund will pay need-based claims for necessities not covered by insurance – food, housing, medical services, etc. Applications are available at all Veteran Affairs parish service offices and at www.vetaffairs.com and www.la.ngb.army.mil.

ALEXANDRIA VA MEDICAL CENTER TO ENROLL PRIORITY EIGHTS AND THREE NEW CLINICS WILL BRING CARE CLOSER TO HOME

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced plans to reopen enrollment in its health care system by July 2009 to about 265,000 Veterans whose incomes exceed the current thresholds. VA suspended enrollment in 2003 for Priority Group Eight (high income) Veterans because it was unable to provide all enrolled Veterans with timely access to its health care due to a tremendous growth in the number of Veterans then seeking enrollment. VA now plans to reopen enrollment for a portion of these Veterans without compromising the Departments ability to provide high quality health care services to all enrolled Veterans who are eligible for care. Congress provided funds in VA’s fiscal year 2009 budget to support the new enrollment.

“We’re pleased to be able to offer what has been called “the best care anywhere to many more new Veterans,” said Alexandria VA Medical Center Director Ms. Barbara Watkins. “We’ll be able to provide these newly enrolled Veterans with the kind of timely, high quality health care Veterans who already use our system are accustomed to.” The change affects Veterans whose incomes exceed the current VA means test and geographic means test income thresholds by 10 percent or less. An enrollment calculator was developed and is available online at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator> to determine whether Veterans are eligible under this new regulation and if their incomes fall within the new 10 percent income threshold guidelines.

In 1996, Congress established a priority-based enrollment system for VA and a uniform package of medical benefits for all enrollees. The legislation opened enrollment in VA’s health care system to all eligible Veterans and

required that each year the Secretary of Veterans Affairs assess Veteran's demand for services and determine if the necessary resources are available to provide timely, quality care to all enrollees.

Enrollment for the lowest priority of the eight groups – Veterans who are not being compensated for a military-related disability and who have incomes above a set threshold – was suspended on January 18, 2003, although Veterans in that priority group who were already enrolled for care were permitted to remain enrolled.

VA's computer systems are being modified to accommodate the changes, and the Department is preparing communication and education materials to ensure that Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, and the public are aware of the coming changes.

“The rule will take effect by June 30, 2009, if the regulatory process proceeds smoothly,” Alexandria VA Medical Center Director, Ms. Barbara Watkins said. “We look forward to welcoming these newly eligible Veterans into the Alexandria VA Medical Center system. We will also continue to monitor wait times to ensure the quality of care is not adversely affected.” For more information on VA's changes to the Priority Group Eight restriction, you may visit the VA's Health Care Eligibility and Enrollment website, located at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/eligibility/PG8Relaxation.asp>.

The opening of three additional Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in the Alexandria catchment area will bring the world-class health care of the Department of Veteran Affairs closer to home for Louisiana Veterans. This growth in community clinics will continue to help the VA meet Veterans' expectations for prompt, quality service, with 98 percent of Veterans seen within 30 days in all types of VA primary care facilities throughout the country.

Solicitations for Requests for Proposals for the two new clinics in Lake Charles and Natchitoches have been done, and the review of submissions is underway. The CBOC for the Leesville/Fort Polk area will be located on the grounds of Fort Polk. A site has been identified and negotiations between the Department of Defense and Veteran Affairs are in progress. It is anticipated that all three CBOCs will be operational in early 2010.

SHREVEPORT VET CENTER

Retirees that live around the Minden to Ruston area, will have new days, times, and locations for the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) group session. The information is as follows: The fourth Thursday of every month from 1000 to 1130 at the First United Methodist Church, 1215 Myrtle Street, Acadia, LA 71001. The first and third Thursday of every month, the PTSD group session is held at the Army Career and Alumni Program Center, BLDG. 2155 on Fort Polk at 1230 to 1330. On the second and fourth Thursday of every month at 1230-1330 the PTSD group session is held at the VFW in Leesville, LA. For more information contact the Shreveport Vet Center at (318) 861-1776.

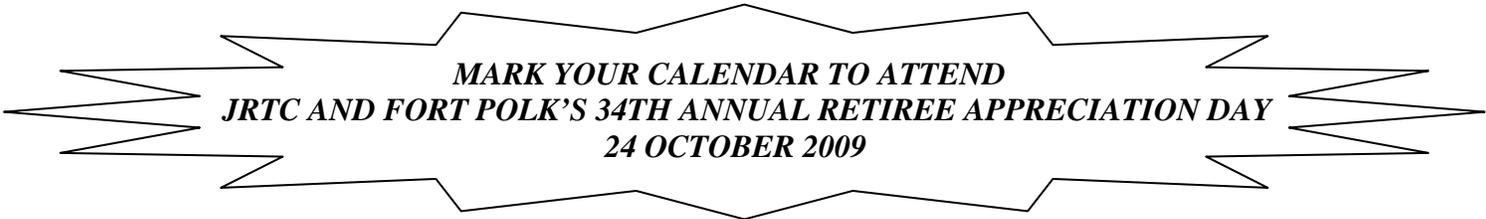


FORT POLK RSO IS HERE TO SERVE YOU!

If you need any assistance with Retiree benefits, feel free to contact the Fort Polk Retirement Services Officer (RSO) or staff at (337) 531-0363, or you may write to DHR, Consolidated In/Out Processing, RSO, Bldg. 1830, 2030 14th Street, Fort Polk, LA 71459-2305. E-mail: polk_rso@conus.army.mil. Please include your telephone number in your correspondence.

DHR CONSOLIDATED IN/OUT
PROCESSING RSO BLDG 1830
2030 14TH STREET STE 4
FORT POLK LA 71459-5302

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



***MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO ATTEND
JRTC AND FORT POLK'S 34TH ANNUAL RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY
24 OCTOBER 2009***

The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in transacting public business as required by law of the Department. Use of funds for printing this publication has been approved by the United States Army Forces Command, FCJ6-OAP, Publications and Printing, Fort McPherson, GA 30330-6000 on 30 Nov 90. The local office for publication of this periodical is the Directorate of Human Resources, Retirement Services Office, ATTN: IMSE-POL-HRM, Fort Polk, LA 71459-5302. Commercial and DSN Telephone Numbers: Comm: (337) 531-0363; DSN 863-0363. This publication is mailed to all US Army retirees living in Louisiana and in nine counties of Southeast Texas, as well as retirees from all branches of service residing in a 40-mile radius of Fort Polk. Articles in this bulletin do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of the Army or Fort Polk. We do our best to ensure accuracy; some material was provided by the RSO.