

RETIREE BULLETIN

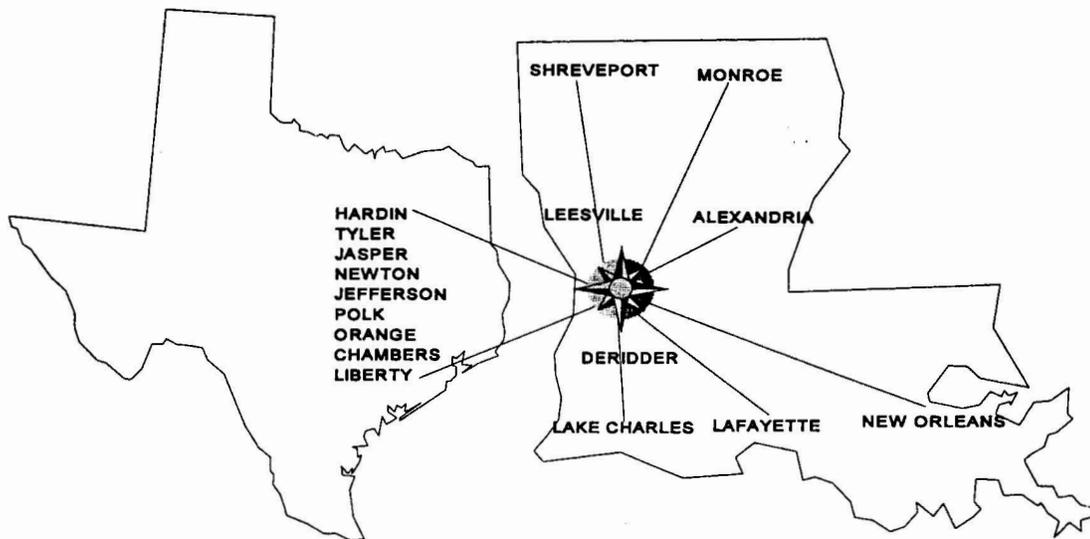


VOLUME 1

SPRING

MAY 2004

COME JOIN US FOR THE 29TH ANNUAL RETIREE OPEN HOUSE



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MASTHEAD FOR RETIREE BULLETIN

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Editors: Dane Goodwin, Adjutant General, and Arlon Miller, Retirement Services Officer (RSO).

Frequency of Publication: Twice a year.

Distribution Scheme: 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.

Statement to Retirees: It is extremely important that US Army retirees inform the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, US Military Retirement Pay, P. O. Box 7130, London, Kentucky 40742-7130 of any change of mailing address.

EDITOR'S NOTE: 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.

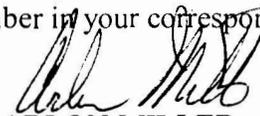
The Retiree Bulletin is published by the Retirement Services Office, for the purpose of communicating with retired military personnel and their family members who reside in the state of Louisiana and Southeast Texas. It is intended to provide information of value and interest to you. We are here to help you with problems concerning your rights, benefits, and privileges. We welcome your comments or suggestions to assist us in providing a better service to you.


DANE GOODWIN
Adjutant General

NOTE FROM YOUR RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICER

I cordially invite you and your family to attend the JRTC and Fort Polk's 29th Retiree Appreciation Day on 30 October 2004. It is our pleasure to recognize the efforts of the men and women who have made the United States military the outstanding active force that it is today. I thank you, the military retiree, for your dedication, contribution, and continued support. This is a great opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet many new members of the retired community. Please make plans to attend.

If you need any assistance with the retiree benefits, feel free to contact the undersigned or staff at (337) 531-0363, or you may write to AG Consolidated In/Out-Processing, RSO, Bldg 1830, 2030 14th Street, Suite 128, Fort Polk, LA 71459-5302 E-mail: Arlon.Miller@polk.army.mil. Please include your telephone number in your correspondence.


ARLON MILLER
Retirement Services Officer

**RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S
LETTER**

Dear Service Retirees and Spouses:

I was appointed Chairman of the Fort Polk Retiree Council by BG Jason Kamiya on April 1, 2004. With the caliber of council members who are dedicated to providing outstanding insight into vital issues and concerns of military retirees in the Fort Polk area, and with the support of an outstanding Retirement Service Office (RSO) and Adjutant General, I have no qualms about accepting this position.

I ask for your continued support and assistance. Please provide your input as to what we could do better and items you would like to have added or deleted on program agendas. I would like for our council members to be more involved and sit on Fort Polk committees rather than me be on all of them.

Everyone in Washington acknowledges that the current provisions of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) needs revising. No other federal annuitant sustains a loss of twenty percent of his or her annuity when he or she reaches 62. Just the military retirees when we need it the most. This being an election year, we have been provided with a golden opportunity to influence our legislators to arrive at a solution to our SBP and other military retiree concerns. We must share these concerns with an incumbent, a challenger, or both.

On February 11, 2004, Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and John McCain (R-AZ) joined to introduce S.2065, the Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retiree Act of 2004. S.2065 a companion bill to H.R. 3474 introduces by Representative Chris VanHollen (D-MD) would waiver Medicare Part B premiums for all military retirees (and their

dependents) that entered service before December 7, 1957.

Do not forget that while sending letters, e-mails, and storming the Hill are all valuable legislative tools, that the easiest and possibly the most effective thing we can do is visit legislators' district officers. I urge you to continue your assistance in contacting our elected officials.

"Retired Still Serving."



ALVA LARY
Colonel, AUS (Retired)
Chairman, Fort Polk
Retiree Council

COMMISSARY NEWS

The Commissary operating hours are:

Sunday1000-1800
MondayClosed
Tuesday0930-2000
Wednesday0930-2000
Thursday.....0930-2000
Friday0930-2000
Saturday.....0900-2000

The Commissary will open at 0800 with checkout service limited for Early Bird Shopping Tuesday-Friday.

SPECIAL CASE LOT SALES

May Worldwide Case Lot Sale, 29-30 May 2004. Please mark your calendars.

Point of contact is Barbara Zanyk, Store Director, Fort Polk. LA (337) 531-2747.

FORT POLK VETERINARY CLINIC

The Fort Polk Veterinary Treatment Facility is available to all retirees. The facility provides vaccinations, minor sick call appointments, and adoptions from our stray facility. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our friendly staff at (337) 531-1322 from 0830-1530 Monday thru Friday.

MEDICARE PART B RELIEF STILL PENDING

As of mid-March, Medicare's managers still had not opened enrollment in Medicare Part B for up to 90,000 military retirees who did not enroll when first eligible. The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 authorize those retirees to enroll without late penalties during a special enrollment period that ends this 31 December 2004. Once enrolled, they can obtain medical treatment and prescription services through Tricare for Life. Also under the act, military beneficiaries who enrolled in Part B in 2001, 2002, 2003, or 2004 and paying late enrollment penalties can have them eliminated effective 1 January 2004, by demonstrating that they are covered under Tricare for Life. The clock continues to tick for these older retirees and spouses while they wait for Medicare's Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to act. The latest word was it may be April before Medicare's managers have the enrollment opened up to retirees.

COMBAT-RELATED ELIGIBILITY RULES ARE CHANGING

What: Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC, which can also be found at www.crsc.army.mil) was enacted by Congress to provide tax free monies in addition to retired pays for those retirees having combat-related disabilities.

Who: Uniformed Army Retirees drawing both retired and VA pays.

Eligibility: To qualify you must meet at least one of the following injury based criteria:

1. **Direct combat** with a hostile force.
2. **Hazardous duty** - flight, paratrooper, demolitions, sea diving, etc.
3. **Simulating war** - Training exercises, but not PT formations and the like.
4. **Instrument of war** - need not be during war, but equipment use must be different than that used in a civilian capacity.

Three Programs, which have their basis in the Veteran Affairs Medical Diagnosis Rating codes:

CRSC 1 - effective 1 June 2003

CRSC 2 - effective 1 January 2004

Concurrent (Concurrent Disability Program or CDP) Receipt

Differences between the programs:

CRSC 1 - must have either a combat-related 60% VA medical diagnosis code or 10% and Purple Heart. This program only applies to retirees with 20 active duty years of service or 7,200 points (20 years) if a reservist.

CRSC 2 - must have 10% combat-related VA medical diagnosis code or greater. This program applies to both retirees from active duty and reservists drawing their retirement and VA pays.

Concurrent (Concurrent Disability Program or CDP) Receipt - Highpoints only:

1. Must have 50% or greater VA rated injury; will receive automatically 1 February 2004.
2. It is taxable and can be docked for alimony and other deductions.
3. If you have 100% injury,

currently the maximum payable this year is \$750. 4. You can only choose CDP or CRSC, but not both.

So, if you qualify with combat-relatedness based on the 60% > requirement or 10% Purple Heart, your pay is retroactive back to 1 June 2003.

If you qualify with combat-relatedness at 10% to 50%, your pay is retroactive back to 1 January 2004. In both cases you will receive pays retroactive no matter when you submit your application, even if next year. This does not apply to Chapter 61 medical requirements under 20 years or any retirement under 20 years active or reserve.

Note: Further developments and updates will be provided as information becomes available. A new application form will be available at that time. DOD Program Guidelines have not been issued to the services, as of this date. In the meantime, the service boards responsible for processing CRSC applications will continue accepting applications from all eligible retirees using the existing forms. In other words, retirees with combat-related disabilities of 10-50 percent do not have to wait for DOD to publish the revised form.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS READJUSTMENT COUNSELING

THE VET CENTER

The Shreveport Vet Center seeks to provide services and counseling to assist veterans in readjusting to civilian life. Veterans who served on active duty in combat during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, or the campaigns in Lebanon,

Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and the Global war on Terrorism.

In addition, bereavement counseling and assistance is available to parents, spouses, and children of armed forces personnel who died in service to our country. Also eligible are family members of military reservist and National Guard personnel who die while on active duty. Counseling is provided at the Vet Center to help veterans resolve war related psychological difficulties and to help them achieve a successful post war adjustment to civilian life. Assistance includes individual, group, and family counseling. The Vet Center also provides community outreach and educational services.

One common problem among combat veterans is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, commonly called PTSD. This refers to such symptoms as nightmares, distressing intrusive recollections or memories, flashbacks, anxiety or sudden reaction after exposure to traumatic events. PTSD affects functioning in school, work and family. Counseling is also provided to veterans with difficulties due to sexual assault or harassment while on active duty at the Vet Center.

In areas distant from the Vet Center, coverage is provided to all veterans through our outreach program.

Counseling is provided at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Leesville, Louisiana, Alexandria, Louisiana, Natchitoches, Louisiana, Monroe, Louisiana, Longview and Texarkana, Texas.

For more information, please call Reginald Horton at (800) 863-7441, ext. 6124, (318) 861-1776. For the Fort Polk/Leesville area, call 337-531-1591.

TRICARE AWARDS NEW MAIL ORDER PHARMACY CONTRACT

The new TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) contract provides a worldwide, full-service mail order pharmacy program to all TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries.

The TMOP provides another option for TRICARE beneficiaries to meet their prescription needs in addition to military and retail pharmacies. All three options for pharmacy services will be monitored by the Pharmacy Data Transaction Service (PDTS), a patient medication record that enhances patient safety.

Beneficiaries may visit the Express Scripts Inc. web site at <http://www.express-scripts.com> for more information or use the following quick reference guide:

- Order a refill - (866) 363-8667
- Check on the Order - (866) 363-8667
- Get a Mail Order Registration Form - Military Treatment Facilities, TRICARE Regional Service Center or (800) 444-5445
- Speak to a Registered Pharmacist - Toll free, (866) 363-8667

TRICARE RETIREE DENTAL PROGRAM

Retirees and their families' interested in enrolling in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program can call the contractor, Delta Dental

Plan of California, at 1-888-838-8737, or enroll on-line at www.ddpdelta.org.

ID CARD FACILITY HOURS OF OPERATION

The Fort Polk ID Card Section is located at 2030 14th Street, in building 1830. Hours of operation are: Monday - Friday from 0900 to 1630 hours. The telephone numbers for information and/or assistance are (337) 531-1891/1430. If you live outside the immediate area of Fort Polk, always call before making a trip to the ID Card Section to ensure there has not been a temporary change in operating hours due to holidays, training events or system problems. Also, bring all applicable documents, such as retirement orders, marriage certificate, etc., in case of computer failure.

