



131st BW RAO Newsletter

April - June 2018, 2nd Quarter Issue



The O’Fallon Veterans/131BW Retirees Activities Office (RAO) is committed to continuing to provide you the best support possible. Contact us by phone, email or stop by the office in the O’Fallon City Hall to see how we can help you.

The RAO has an on-going need for volunteers to assist and inform the retiree community. If you are a retired military member or spouse from any military branch, and you are available 4 hours for 1 day a week from either 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or noon to 4 p.m., contact the office to volunteer. Additional volunteers are needed substituting for staff needing to miss a day for other needs. Our phone number is 636-379-5577, or, email us at veteransaffairs@ofallon.mo.us

Our office is open from 9 AM to 4 PM Monday thru Friday.

131ST BW ACTIVITIES

1.

SUBJECT:

In recognition of outstanding support to U.S. Strategic Command’s (USSTRATCOM) strategic deterrence mission, U.S. Air Force Gen. John Hyten, commander of USSTRATCOM, announced the winners of the 2017 Omaha Trophies Feb. 26, 2018. The Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Bomb Wing and U.S. Air Force 509th Bomb Wing were co-named winners of the Strategic Bomber category.

Message from Col. Col. Ken "Willie B" Eaves , 131st Bomb Wing Commander, Missouri Air National Guard.

Team,

I am thrilled to inform you that the 509th and 131st Bomb Wings have AGAIN won the Omaha Trophy for Best Strategic Bomber Wing. This is an outstanding testament of the work our Total Force Airmen commit to day-in and day-out as part of Team Whiteman.

I could not be more proud of you and the work we have accomplished together in 2017... truly a phenomenal year. I mentioned in my December Commander's Call that I don't know what will come our way this year, but I know we are ready for anything.

Chief Settle and I are extremely proud of you and proud to serve alongside this amazing team... Congratulations!

Willie B

2.

Congratulations to the 131st Bomb Wing Maintenance Group on winning the Air National Guard Maintenance Effectiveness Award!

This award recognizes maintenance units that have effectively managed resources in three separate areas: mission accomplishment, innovative and effective use of maintenance resources, and personnel quality of life programs.

The award is the highest recognition in the United States Air Force aircraft maintenance career field. It recognizes the unit that has best met the objective of providing safe, serviceable and available equipment for sustained use during peacetime and wartime.

**MILITARY SERVICE VERIFICATION CAN BE
URGENTLY OBTAINED, IF NEEDED, TO HONOR
OUR VETERANS WITH MILITARY HONORS
DURING THEIR FUNERAL**

To honor a veteran with military honors during their funeral, the next of kin must provide the funeral home with a copy of the veteran's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) or a National Guard Form 22 (National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service). If the next of kin doesn't have a copy of one of these forms, they will need to submit an urgent burial request to the National Personnel Records Center as follows:

- Obtain a copy of Standard Form 180 (Request for Military Records) from the National Personnel Record Center at their website, <http://www.archive.gov/files/research/order/standard-form-180.pdf>.
- Complete the form to the best of their ability, date and sign the form.
- Once the form is completed, the funeral home must attach proof of the veteran's death and fax the request form to the Personnel Records Center's urgent fax line which is (314) 801-0764. Address the fax to ATTN: URGENT BURIAL, and provide the date and time needed for burial/memorial service.

Be sure to include a good telephone number so they can call if any questions arise, and a return fax number with the name of the deceased veteran. The Personnel Records Center usually has emergency requests completed within 72 hours after receiving the request. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the O'Fallon Veterans Assistance Office Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 4 PM. call (636) 379-5577.

PRE-NEED DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BURIAL IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY

Veterans would like to know, in advance, whether they are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemetery. The “Pre-Need Eligibility Determination Program,” is specifically aimed at helping individuals with burial planning and making sure their wishes are known.

The Veterans Administration (VA) will, upon request, make pre-need determinations of eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery in advance of need. Having this information will help Veterans and their family in a time of need use the benefits they have earned, for their families and for themselves.

Once the VA determines that individuals are eligible veterans, they will be entitled to the same benefits they would receive were a determination made at the time of need (time of death).

To apply complete VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery. The VA will only accept this form by U. S. mail or fax.

Please mail to: National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

Or fax to: (toll-free): 1-855-840-8299.

Visit <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf> for a fillable form.

Note: You must complete a separate form for each member of your family that will be buried with you. i.e.; one for you and one for your spouse. Also note this does not guarantee burial in a specific national cemetery only that you are eligible nationwide in a cemetery that is accepting new plots.

NEW MEDICARE CARDS

Starting in April 2018, Medicare will begin mailing new cards to everyone who gets Medicare benefits. Why? To help protect your identity, Medicare is removing Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. Instead, the new cards will have a unique Medicare Number. This will happen automatically. **You don't need to do anything or pay anyone to get your new card.**

Medicare will mail your card, at no cost, to the address you have on file with the Social Security Administration. If you need to update your official mailing address, visit your [online Social Security account](https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/) at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/> or call 1-800-772-1213. When you get your new card, your Medicare coverage and benefits will stay the same.

Read more about the new Medicare card at

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/03/new-medicare-cards-coming-soon>

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR BENEFITS

Do you have questions about your TRICARE medical and dental benefit? The TRICARE publications webpage at <https://tricare.mil/publications> can help you find the answers. You can view, print or download TRICARE handbooks, newsletters and other educational materials. Select categories from the sub-headings or use the search field to search all publications. You'll find products ranging from broad topics like the **TRICARE Plans Overview** to detailed topics like the **Maternity Care Brochure**. Products are continuously updated and added. If you have suggestions for new products or feedback about existing products, we would love to hear from you. Fill out the publications survey so we can better serve you!

NOTE: The publications survey is available at <https://survey.foreseeresults.com/survey/display?cid=392b86724fb6435d87f87666ca96b52b&sid=functional-survey>

This is your benefit. Learn more about the 2018 changes at <https://www.tricare.mil/changes>, visit the publications page at www.tricare.mil/publications and take command of your health!

SOURCE: TRICARE News Bulletin at https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/01_09_18_Take_Command_Resources

TRICARE UPDATES TRICARE.MIL

TRICARE has introduced some new features and tools on the TRICARE website to help users find what they are looking for more quickly. Use the Find a TRICARE Plan, Find a Doctor and Find a Phone Number Tools to see what plans you qualify for, locate a nearby provider or get contact information. Use the TRICARE website to know what's covered. The TRICARE website has also been improved for viewing on mobile devices. For guides on TRICARE programs, visit TRICARE.com.

TRICARE FOR LIFE USERS SURPRISED BY DRUG COST INCREASE

Tricare for Life beneficiaries caught off guard by the recent increase to pharmacy costs, including a change that moved drugs that had been completely free to a charge of \$7 for a 90-day supply. Drug prices increased Feb. 1 for all Tricare users, including retirees over 65 on Tricare for Life. A 90-day supply of generic drugs received through the system's Express Scripts mail-order pharmacy went from free to \$7. Co-pays on brand-name drugs received through the mail went from \$20 to \$24 and from \$49 to \$53 for non-formulary drugs.

For prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies, a 30-day supply for generic drugs increased from \$10 to \$11, while brand-name drugs went from \$24 to \$28; non-formulary drugs went from \$49 to \$53. Drugs filled at a military treatment facility continue to be free. Drug costs typically increase slightly every Feb. 1. But the increase from free to \$7 for generics received by mail came as a surprise for many users on Tricare for Life, according to feedback I've received by email. Many users had read that changes to Tricare happening Jan. 1 didn't really impact them. So what caused the confusion? Too many changes at once.

Tricare for Life users really are not impacted by the big changes to Tricare that hit Jan. 1 beyond this minor calendar shift that most users won't even notice.

What was poorly communicated, perhaps, was that the pharmacy increases were completely separate from the Jan. 1 updates. Like all pharmacy cost changes in years past, those updates do impact Tricare for Life users

To see the new TRICARE pharmacy copayments, visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacycosts. To learn more about the TRICARE Pharmacy Program, or move your prescriptions to home delivery, visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacy.

DECISION READY CLAIMS

What types of claims are eligible for the DRC Program?

Currently, the DRC Program is available for the following types of compensation claims:

Direct Service Connection Claims

Presumptive Service Connection Claims

Secondary Service Connection Claims

Increased Disability Claims

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims

Pre-Discharge Claims

To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim (this does not include Pre-Discharge or DIC claims). You also cannot file your claim through the DRC Program if you currently have another disability claim pending, if you have an appeal pending for the condition you are claiming, or if your claim is related to pension or special monthly compensation (SMC). To see a full list of exclusions that would disqualify your claim from the DRC Program, go to www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/drc.asp.

How do I file a claim under the DRC Program?

You must work with an accredited VSO to file a claim through the DRC Program. You can find an accredited VSO near you and appoint them to serve as your representative free of charge by going to www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search.

Your accredited VSO will help you determine if the DRC Program is right for your claim. They are fully trained on the DRC Program and can serve as a qualified advocate for you.

What information do I need to submit so that my claim is decision-ready?

You will need copies of your federal records, medical records, completed Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs), and any other evidence that supports your claim. Depending on the type of DRC you're filing, you may also need copies of your Service Treatment Records (STRs), the Veteran's death certificate, and all of the Veteran's relevant medical records. Your VSO can also help you gather any medical information you are missing to make sure your claim is complete.

As part of the DRC Program, VSOs can now quickly request a VA claim exam, also called a Compensation & Pension (C&P) exam, for you, if needed, before you submit your claim. Providing all relevant evidence when you submit your DRC allows VA to process your claim faster.

For more information about the DRC Program, go to

www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/drc.asp or call 1-800-827-1000 (toll-free).

HEARING AIDS-MILITARY RETIREE DEPENDENT'S ELIGIBILITY

A provision in last year's National Defense Authorization Act gave DoD permission to provide hearing aids, at government cost, to dependents of military retirees. This is great news for retired beneficiaries, who are already eligible for hearing aids through the Retiree At -Cost Hearing Aid Program, popularly known as RACHAP. Now retiree dependents are eligible to use this program too. Key features of the program:

- Eligible beneficiaries directly purchase hearing aids, utilizing the government contract price through manufactures (at cost). Available at military treatment facilities (MTFs) only.
- Cost at the MTF is \$300-\$400 per hearing aid; the average savings to the beneficiary is \$1,600 to \$3,600 per hearing aid.

- This is a voluntary program for MTFs. This means individual MTFs are allowed to determine whether they will participate.
- Currently, there are 27 MTFs participating in the program, representing all three services and located only in the continental U.S. (CONUS). 10
- Capacity is limited at most MTFs. Active duty service members and their family members have priority.
- The program is not a TRICARE benefit. A hearing aid is considered a medical device, and getting one typically requires a series of three or four appointments with a qualified audiologist or technician for an evaluation, fitting, and follow-up. It's a bit more complicated than obtaining a new pair of eyeglasses. It's also more resource intensive, which is why many MTFs may have limited capacity. Military Health System officials have approved the new policy and indicated they intend to do a supply-and-demand analysis to determine how and where to expand this popular program. If you are a retiree or retiree dependent interested in the RACHAP program, contact your closest MTF to determine whether they participate and find out how to get an appointment. [Source: MOAA Leg Up | July 21, 2017]

LINK TO RETIREE PUBLICATIONS

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Army Echoes | http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement |
| Navy Shift Colors: | www.shiftcolors.navy.mil |
| Air Force Afterburner: | www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner |
| Marine Corps Semper Fidelis: | |
| | www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/ Semper Fidelis |
| Coast Guard Evening Colors: | http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras |

INPUT: If you have any suggestions for any type of additional articles you may like to have included in the future newsletters please email us. We look forward for more input from you and other agencies.

We will publish this newsletter four times a year if the supply of information is available.

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