



## JEFFERSON BARRACKS SATELLITE RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSWIRE March - April 2017

*The Volunteer staff of the Jefferson Barracks Satellite Retiree Activities Office publishes this NEWSWIRE to inform all military retirees, spouses, widows, widowers and their families of changes to their benefits, the status of current legislation impacting their retirement, health related information, defense policies and other matters affecting their military rights, benefits and other obligations. It contains information about Scott AFB; Jefferson Barracks AFS and the local retired community.*

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR MARCH-APRIL 2017**

**March 16, Thursday** --- Monthly luncheon 1100 Hrs. **Bandana's BBQ** 1220 Big Bill Road, Arnold, MO 63010 (636) 282-3328 Directions: I-55 south to MO State Highway 141, then turn east on Highway 141 to Big Bill road. Coming from the south, take I-55 north to Mo State Highway 141, then turn east on Highway 141 to Big Bill Rd.

**April 20, Thursday** --- Monthly luncheon 1100 Hrs. **Olive Garden**, 5529 South Lindbergh. 314 849 2553. Located near South Lindbergh and Tesson Ferry Rd

### **"Reminder" 2017 Jefferson Barracks Retiree Appreciation Day**

The Jefferson Barracks Satellite Retiree Activities Office, 20+ Armed Forces Association and the Missouri National Guard Retiree Council will be holding a military Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) this year at Jefferson Barracks National Guard Military Post on March 25, 2017.

The Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) was designed with all retirees in mind. You will find it a great source of the latest information for retirees and Family members, but, in general, it provides an opportunity to renew acquaintance; listen to guest speakers/vendors; renew ID Cards; attendance prizes and more.

If you hadn't receive an invitation or haven't sent one in yet, **there's still time**. The RSVP date will be March 10, 2017.

If for some reason, the retired member did not receive an invitation they can use the form that is attached to the newsletter.

**Air National Guard Retires Meeting - 6 MARCH 2017**

Location: Building 24 on the Jefferson Barracks National Guard Base.

Need directions call the Guard Gate at 314-527-8995 or Gale Going 314-703-0548.

Using GPS? Look up 65 Kearney Street, 63125 or take Interstate -270 south to exit #2. Go North (left) to the 4th stop light and turn right at Walgreen's. Follow the ANG Signs.

SOCIAL STARTS AT 5:00 p.m. DINNER AT: 6:30 p.m.

CORN BEEF, CABBAGE, AND WHOLE WHITE POTATOES PROVIDED

A SMALL AMOUNT OF ROAST BEEF WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE THAT DON'T LIKE CORNED BEEF

PLEASE BRING A COVERED DISH OR DESSERT

A SHORT MEETING WILL FOLLOW

GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE COL. GARY LANGE

## **Commissary Prices Update 08 - Savings Less Than Previously Thought**

Source: Karen Jowers- MilitaryTimes

Shoppers save 23.7 percent by using commissaries instead of civilian grocery stores -- lower than the 30 percent savings claimed for years, according to a new analysis by the Defense Commissary Agency. The drop isn't a result of price increases, at least not directly -- it's a change in how DeCA tracks the savings, moving from a solely national model to one that includes a regional comparison of commissary prices with those at nearby stores. "This enhanced way of calculating savings doesn't change the actual dollars that patrons save, but it will give patrons a better understanding of price comparisons in their local area," said Joseph H. Jeu, DeCA director and CEO. Officials now calculate savings in each of eight regions and factor it into the overall savings measurement. The new formula led to a lower percentage of overall savings, according to DeCA spokesman Kevin Robinson.

Some advocates question the nearly 7 percentage-point difference in the savings benefit. "I was struck by the regional savings, versus the 30 percent savings. In some regions it was significant and surprising," said Eileen Huck, government relations deputy director for the National Military Family Association. "And across the board, even the global average was more than 6 percentage points less. "What I'm concerned about is whether the value of the benefit is really less than what we've been told all along? What's more reliable -- the old methodology or this new method?"

**THE NEW MATH** -- Commissary prices are the same regardless of region; regional savings may rise or fall depending on an area's cost of living or other factors that could affect pricing. Savings calculations include applicable sales taxes on commercial grocery store purchases and the 5 percent surcharge on commissary purchases. Without these taxes and surcharge calculations, the overall savings in commissaries would be 25.7 percent. The highest percent of savings is overseas, where customers at 61 stores save an average of 44.2 percent over stores outside the gate. Next is the Alaska/Hawaii region, where the nine stores save customers an average of 32.6 percent. The U.S. average savings at 20.2 percent for 177 stores, with a global average of

23.7 percent (238 stores). In the U.S. the lowest percentage of savings is in the Mountain region, at 17.6 percent. The other regions:

- New England (36 stores): 21.4 percent
- South Atlantic (30 stores): 19.9 percent
- South Central (33 stores): 18.1 percent
- Pacific (31 stores): 20.9 percent
- Mountain (20 stores): 17.6 percent
- North Central (18 stores) 20.2 percent

**PRICE CHANGES COMING** -- The savings calculations set an important benchmark. As defense officials move into new pricing systems sometime this year that allow them to raise prices on some items to help fund commissary operations, the baseline will allow DeCA and Congress to monitor the savings to ensure that the benefit isn't adversely affected by lower overall savings. "Military families have been told for years that when they shop at the commissary regularly, they can expect to see a 30 percent savings. This report says that's not what they're going to see moving forward," Huck said. "It may reflect what it is, but it certainly sets the benchmark going forward lower than what military families have been told."

Defense officials over the last several years have pressured commissary officials to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars required to operate the 238 commissaries worldwide – currently about \$1.4 billion. Congress, at the request of defense officials, allowed the commissary officials to test a system of variable pricing at some point this year, raising the prices of some items and lowering the prices of others. Commissary officials have also contracted with a company to start offering some private label brand items, sometimes known as generics, and officials expect to make profits on these items. These pricing changes will mark a fundamental shift in the way commissaries price their groceries, moving from a system where commissaries sell groceries at cost plus a 5 percent surcharge that is used for construction and renovation of stores. An additional 1 percent is added to the cost of items to cover loss and spoilage. By using the taxpayer funds to pay for operational costs like employee salaries, officials haven't had to mark up the cost of groceries.

Congress, at the request of Defense Department officials, mandated that the commissary agency update the methodology it uses to calculate customer savings. The savings percentage was previously calculated by comparing commissary prices on about 38,000 brand name items to the prices of those items in civilian grocery stores, using pricing data from Nielsen. The prices were averaged across the year and across the board on every item. Now, in addition to that comparison, DeCA is doing market basket comparisons between commissaries and local stores. They've contracted with a company to manually compare local prices on about 1,000 products, which are representative of a shopper's typical market basket. Not every commissary will be included in the market basket comparison every quarter; it will be a rolling process where commissaries are included at some point during the year. Their prices are compared with two to three local civilian grocers, including "super centers" such as some Wal-Mart's, in close proximity to the commissary.

Advocates have asked for transparency in the process of changing the savings baseline calculations, and how DeCA officials will move forward; this is a step in that direction, Huck said, but questions remained about which products were chosen for the comparison. "We've been concerned about the value of the benefit for the people who need it the most -- junior families," Huck said. It's not clear whether diapers and baby food, for example, are among the items that are compared across the spectrum. This local comparison adds an element to the comparison that's based on a snapshot in time, said Tom Gordy, president of the Armed Forces Marketing Council, an association of members of industry who supply products to commissaries and exchanges. For example, a civilian grocery store may put bananas on sale at a deep discount for a week to bring more customers into the store. In addition, a number of civilian grocery stores located near military installations price

their items to compete with commissaries, but many commissary customers don't live directly outside the gates of military installations.

Until now, commissary prices were required to be uniform at all commissary stores. But the new tests will allow commissary officials to increase prices on some items, and lower prices on some items, in order to make money overall. "In theory, nothing changes for the patron in terms of prices," Gordy said. With the new variable pricing system, he said, "the devil will be in the details. DeCA may decide to take a loss on bananas, but something else will go up in price."

## **Commissary Private Label Products - Brand Names Unveiled**

Source: <https://commissaries.com> | Kevin L. Robinson

The Defense Commissary Agency has chosen the names "Freedom's Choice™" and "HomeBase™" for its private label product assortment. That announcement came from DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. JEU. Private label, also known as store brands, will be appearing on commissary shelves in May. "Commissary patrons have been telling DeCA for quite some time that they want to take advantage of the value offered by store brands, but commissaries have not had their own brand until now," JEU said. "We are proud of our new brands, and I believe our customers are going to be very pleased with the quality and low prices that Freedom's Choice and HomeBase bring to our shelves."



Freedom's Choice will be the commissary brand name for food items and HomeBase for nonfood items such as paper products and other household items. With the initial rollout targeted for May, patrons in commissaries worldwide can expect to see a number of DeCA's Freedom's Choice and HomeBase products. It takes time to develop and allow for a store brand to reach maturity, so the number of Freedom's Choice and HomeBase products will continue to grow much larger over the next four to five years.

"Freedom's Choice and HomeBase will give our patrons another chance to save money without sacrificing quality on brands priced significantly lower than national brands," JEU said. "Our private label products will also be equal or lower in price to commercial grocery store brands. These products will give our patrons the quality they expect and the savings they deserve."

Private label products are offered by retailers under their own, in-house brand or under a brand developed by their suppliers. DeCA conducted extensive research into developing the commissary brands, surveying hundreds of military members and their families to obtain their input for names and logos. "We talked to our customers about a number of package titles and showed them potential artwork for our commissary brands," said Chris Burns, DeCA's executive director for business transformation. "The Freedom's Choice and HomeBase names and logos proved to be overwhelmingly popular." Plans to start promoting Freedom's Choice and HomeBase have already begun and commissary customers will be noticing these names and logos very soon. In December, DeCA announced its partnership with SpartanNash to begin developing the commissary brands. SpartanNash, through its military division MDV, is the leading distributor of grocery products to military commissaries in the United States.

## **NDAA 2017 Update - Impact on Retiree Community**

*Source: Army Echoes | Feb-May 2017*

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDA) of 2017 (signed by President Obama on Dec. 23) has a number of provisions that impact the military's retired community. The following are brief summaries of the provisions; however, more details will follow as DOD agencies translate the law into policies and procedures:

- TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra plans will be terminated on Jan. 1, 2018. Retired members under these two plans and who intend to continue with TRICARE will need to choose between TRICARE Select or TRICARE Prime. By Jan. 1, 2018, the Secretary of Defense will establish a cost sharing, self-managed and preferred-provider network option called TRICARE Select. Eligible beneficiaries will not have restrictions on their choice of health care providers. Monitor TRICARE's website for coming details at [www.tricare.mil/Plans](http://www.tricare.mil/Plans).
- Hearing aids may be sold at cost to dependents of retired service members.
- TRICARE-eligible individuals are eligible to be covered under the Federal Employees Dental Program.
- TRICARE-eligible individuals are eligible to be covered under the Federal Employees Vision Insurance Program.
- The Defense Secretary shall authorize veterans or civilians to be evaluated and treated at a military treatment facility.
- The Defense Secretary shall establish an advisory committee for each military treatment facility. The members cannot be on active duty or a federal employee; they will be considered volunteers. The committee will advise the facility commander or director on administration and beneficiary care at the facility.
- Retired members placed on the temporary disability retired list (TDRL) on or after Jan. 1, 2017, will remain on the list for a maximum of three years instead of the current five years. Soldiers already on the TDRL will not be affected.
- After a divorce, dissolution, annulment, or legal separation and subsequent division of retired pay prior to retirement, retired pay will be calculated based on the service at the time of the court order rather than at retirement.
- The same survivor benefit will now be paid to survivors of Service members who die in the line of duty on active duty and inactive duty for training (IADT). Survivors of members who previously died on IADT will have their annuity recalculated under the same formula used for active duty death SBP. No annuity under this law will be payable prior to Dec. 23, 2016.
- When VA disability compensation offsets a member's retired pay to the point that the member's Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) premiums cannot be paid from retired pay, the SBP premiums can now be paid from the member's Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC). Many members who receive CRSC will no longer have to pay premiums directly to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) or coordinate for the VA to pay DFAS a portion of the member's disability compensation.

- The Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance, which reduces the offset of SBP by VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, has been extended at the current monthly payment amount until May 31, 2018, and will end June 1, 2018, if not extended by Congress.
- The Defense Secretary must make an independent assessment of military SBP and provide Congress a report by Dec. 23, 2017. The report must: cover the interaction of SBP with other federal programs; compare SBP benefits to those available to government and private employees; review the effectiveness of the program to include benefits for deaths on active duty and IADT; and examine the feasibility of replacing SBP with a government subsidy for an alternate insurance product.
- The Defense Secretary must develop and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce reliance on appropriated funding for the Defense Commissary Agency without reducing benefits to patrons or revenue provided by the Services' exchange operations to the morale, welfare and recreation fund.
- The Military Star Card provided by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service will be accepted by Defense Commissary Agency stores.
- Debt to the government through no fault of the member (includes retired members) due to overpayment of pay or allowances and settlement of member's account will not be collected unless the recovery started within 10 years of when the debt was incurred.
- After Dec. 23, 2016, retired military members may only be appointed to federal civil service positions in the Department of Defense during the 180 days immediately after retirement if the minimum rate of basic pay for the position has been increased under 5 U.S.C. 5305 or a waiver has been approved. The clause that permitted appointments during "a state of national emergency" has been eliminated from the law.

Go to <http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20161128/CRPT-114HRPT-S2943.pdf> to review the entire NDAA for 2017.

## **Meanderings of a Senior Mind**

The location of your mailbox shows you how far away from your house you can be in a robe before you start looking like a mental patient.

My therapist said that my narcissism causes me to misread social situations. I'm pretty sure she was hitting on me.

My 60-year kindergarten reunion is coming up soon and I'm worried about the 175 pounds I've gained since then.

I always wondered what the job application is at Hooters. Do they just give you a bra and say, "Here, fill this out?"

Denny's has a slogan, "If it's your birthday, the meal is on us. "If you're in Denny's on your birthday, your life sucks!

The pharmacist asked me my birth date again today. I'm pretty sure she's going to get me something.

I can't understand why women are okay that JC Penny has an older women's clothing line named, "Sag Harbor."

I think it's pretty cool how Chinese people made a language entirely out of tattoos.

Money can't buy happiness, but it keeps the kids in touch!

The reason Mayberry was so peaceful and quiet was because nobody was married. Andy, Aunt Bea, Barney, Floyd, Howard, Goober, Gomer, Sam, Earnest T Bass, Helen, Ellie, Thelma Lou, Clara and, of course Opie were all single. The only married person was Otis, and he stayed drunk.

-30-

**Note to Our Readers:** The Newswire will at times provide links to web sites for additional information. To our readers who receive the Newswire via the U.S. Postal Service, you are not getting full use of this publication because of these links to other information that can only be seen on a computer with internet access. We recommend that you have the Newswire sent to you via e-mail if at all possible. For those readers who do not have Internet access you can come visit us at Building 65, Room 106 Jefferson Barracks. We would be happy to download and print a copy of any information that you may need. See our office hours at the end of this publication.

### Still Serving

73, Jerry

Gerald B Hansen, CMSgt, USAF, (Ret)  
Director, JBSRAO

Robert W. Julius, SMSgt, USAF, (Ret)  
Assistant Director/Newswire Editor

Contact Us:

#### JBSRAO

Telephone: 314 527-8212

E-mail: [usaf.mo.157-oag.list.retirees-office@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.mo.157-oag.list.retirees-office@mail.mil)

Address JBSRAO  
37 Sherman Rm 111  
St. Louis, MO 63125

Office hours are 0900 to 1200 hours Tue, Wed and Thursday.  
On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays the office will be closed at 1100 Hrs for the staff to attend Scott Retiree Council meeting and monthly luncheon.

#### Scott RAO

Telephone: 618 256-5092

E-mail: [scottrao@scott.af.mil](mailto:scottrao@scott.af.mil)

Address: 375th AMW/CVR  
215 Heritage Dr. Rm. 107  
Scott AFB, IL 62225-5009

Office Hours are 0900-1500 Hrs Monday - Friday

**MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL  
2017 RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY**

**SATURDAY MARCH 25 2017**

**Jefferson Barracks MO**

**Building 24**

**9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**Registration 8:00 AM**

**EXHIBITORS**

**DEERS/ID's**

**TRICARE**

**TRICARE Dental**

**Scott Dental Clinic**

**ITT Travel**

**Scott Space A**

**JB Cemetery**

**Retirement Services**

**Office**

**And Many Others!**

**CATERED LUNCH**

**Cost: \$10.00 per Person**

**Menu Will Include:**

**Italian Salad**

**Roast Beef in Au Jus**

**Breast of Turkey with Sauce**

**Cavatelli Con Broccoli**

**Green Beans Almondine**

**Assorted Relish Tray**

**Dinner Rolls**

**Coffee/Ice Tea**

**Dessert**

**PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THE JEFFERSON BARRACKS FOOD PANTRY**  
**BRING A NON PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM**

**Make Checks Payable To**

**St Louis Area V Retirees**

**4800 Stanhope Dr**

**St Louis MO 63128**

**RSVP Due March 10, 2017**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City /Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Branch of Service** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes I will be attending**

**Yes I will be attending and having lunch. Enclosed find a check for lunch \$10.00**

**Yes I will be attending along with my spouse or guest and having lunch.**

**Enclosed find a check for lunch \$20.00**

**No I will not be attending this year**

## NEWSWIRE MARCH – APRIL 2017

**FAIR USE NOTICE:** This newsletter may contain copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. The Editor/Publisher of the “Newswire” at times includes such material in an effort to advance reader’s understanding of veterans’ issues. We believe this constitutes a ‘fair use’ of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material in this newsletter is distributed without profit to those who have expressed an interest in receiving the included information for educating themselves on veteran issues so they can better communicate with their legislators on issues affecting them. For more information go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this newsletter for purposes of your own that go beyond ‘fair use’, you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer:** Information and views expressed by writers in this Newswire are their own and should not be construed to be the official position or policy of DOD, USAF, MONG, Scott AFB or Jefferson Barracks AFS. Every effort is made to verify information provided in this publication, the JBSRAO “Volunteer” staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of information furnished by other agencies.