



AFSA NEWSLETTER



Protecting and Defending the Quality-of-Life Benefits for the
TOTAL AIR FORCE
Enlisted Corps and their Families Since 1961

July 18, 2008

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Medicare/TRICARE Crisis Averted. On July 15, the House and Senate voted to override a Presidential veto of legislation that protects doctors from a 10.6 percent Medicare reimbursement rate cut. The House voted 383-41, the Senate 70-26, to ensure passage of H.R. 6331, the "Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008." This congressional action stops the reimbursement rate cut through 2008 and will increase the doctors' reimbursement rate by 1.1 percent in 2009. For several months, AFSA and its coalition partners had waged a furious grassroots effort to get this legislation passed. Because TRICARE reimbursement rates are tied to those of Medicare, failure of this legislation could well have prompted many doctors to stop treating TRICARE patients. Congress clearly worked together to override the President's veto, but AFSA would have preferred if these same elected officials had worked in a more bipartisan manner to produce a better bill. We're disappointed the legislative branch of government created a crisis, generating anxiety among those that depend on Medicare and TRICARE, by not acting sooner. We thank our members for sending a loud message to Congress. It is imperative we keep the pressure on to find a permanent remedy so this crisis doesn't recur in 2010.

Summit Brings Renewed VA Drive for Women Veterans. An aggressive push to ensure women veterans receive the highest quality of care in VA medical facilities was pledged by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake at a recent VA National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues. Click [HERE](#) to read the entire VA Press Release.

Chief of Staff Retires. On July 11, Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Mosely formally retired after 37 years of extraordinary service. To read about the Chief's retirement ceremony, click [HERE](#).

President Formally Nominates Top Air Force Leaders. President Bush has formally nominated General Norton A. Schwartz to serve as chief of staff, U.S. Air Force; General Schwartz is currently the commander, U.S. Transportation Command. The President also formally nominated Michael Donley to be the new Air Force Secretary. The Senate will hold confirmation hearings next week on July 22.

Senate Confirms Top Iraq War Leaders. By a vote of 95 to 2, the Senate has confirmed Army General David H. Petraeus as commander of the U.S. Central Command--the top commander in the Middle East. General Raymond Odierno received his fourth star and succeeded General Petraeus as Commander, Multinational Force Iraq. To read more about these confirmations and get biographical information about these leaders, click [HERE](#).

VA On-line Applications. The Veterans Administration has announced it will now accept on-line applications from veterans for initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without requiring a claimant's signature. To read about on-line applications through the VA's VONAPP program, click [HERE](#).

Enlisted education gets new namesake. The last in a series of events transforming Air University into streamlined centers for professional education, research and doctrinal development, the Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education was designated on July 11, 2008. The Barnes Center will serve as the umbrella organization for the Air Force Senior NCO Academy, all continental U.S. NCO academies, the Community College of the Air Force and the Air Force First Sergeant Academy. For the entire AFNS article click [HERE](#).

'Troops to Teachers' Translates Military Experience to Classroom. The Defense Department launched the Troops to Teachers program in 1994 to attract departing military members into teaching positions in low-income and underprivileged school districts. Fourteen years later, the program has placed more than 11,000 former troops into public schools nationwide. For the entire DefenseLink article click [HERE](#).

******Special Early-bird Registration Rates End 21 July******

The Gateway to the Air Force... Join your AFSA in San Antonio, Texas

Air Force Sergeants Association Professional Airmen's Conference will take place at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio -- Saturday, August 23 through Wednesday, August 27, 2008.

- For additional information click [HERE](#).
 - Visit our website to make your reservations now: www.hqafsa.org.
 - For Info Expo exhibitor and event sponsorship opportunities, please e-mail marketing@hqafsa.org.
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RECENTLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION:

H.R. 6445, by Rep. Don Cazayoux, D-LA, would prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting certain co-payments from veterans who are catastrophically disabled.

H.R. 6465, by Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite, R-FL, would extend the demonstration project on VA adjustable rate mortgages and the demonstration project on hybrid VA adjustable rate mortgages.

H.R. 6471, the **"Expanding Availability of VA Health Care Act of 2008,"** by Rep. Bob Filner, D-CA, would expand the availability of health care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by adjusting the income level for certain priority veterans.

H.R. 6494, the **"PRO-VETS Act of 2008,"** by Rep. Kirsten E. Gillibrand, D-NY, would provide veterans with individualized notice about available benefits to streamline the application processes for the benefits.

H. Res. 1335, by Rep. Paul W. Hodes, D-NH, is a resolution celebrating the 120-year partnership between the federal government and State veterans' homes.

GENERAL NEWS

Airman's Roll Call. This week's Roll Call focuses on the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) program allows Airmen to earn college credit by examination, thus translating career-gained knowledge into a springboard toward a degree. To read more about this important, no-cost program, click [HERE](#).

USJFCOM Hosts Keystone. Keystone is a course to develop top enlisted leaders by focusing on joint doctrine and operations. To read about Keystone education recently hosted at Suffolk, Virginia, by the U.S. Joint Forces Command, click [HERE](#).

Enlisted Delegation Visits PRC Counterparts. In a recent visit to China, Chief Master Sergeant James A. Roy, Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Pacific Command said the difference between our enlisted servicemembers and China's is like comparing technicians to leaders. To read more about this visit, click [HERE](#).

Recruiting Success. As the "all-volunteer force" passed the 35-year mark, the U.S. Armed Forces marked 13 consecutive months of recruiting success. To read more about this, click [HERE](#).

Fort Sam Houston Medic Training Center. Officials at Fort Sam Houston broke ground for a \$500 million training center for all future enlisted medics of all services. To read about this new consolidated, joint-service center, click [HERE](#).

AAFES to Celebrate 113th Birthday. On July 25, 1895, the War Department issued General Order number 46 directing post commanders to establish an exchange at every post "where practicable." 113 years later, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service continues to serve America's servicemembers at installations throughout the world. To read more about AAFES, click [HERE](#).

Maintainers Keep 'Em Flying. To read how the Tiger Aircraft Maintenance Unit of the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron keeps the birds in the air in Iraq, click [HERE](#).

EOD Mission in Southwest Asia. To read about the mission of explosive ordnance disposal Airmen working to keep the roads safe and respond to unexploded ordnance situations, click [HERE](#).

Cutting Hazardous Response Work. An innovative Airman from the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron's Emergency Management Flight found a way to consolidate a previously three- or four-carton hazardous response kit to one container, thereby reducing response times from hours to minutes. To read about this important effort, click [HERE](#).

ATOC Supports Army Surveillance. To read how 12 Airmen of the 380th Air Terminal Operations Center provide soldiers weaponized surveillance and support in Iraq and Afghanistan by facilitating the use of Army blimps, click [HERE](#).

Facilities for Working Dogs Upgraded in AOR. The important mission of military working dogs must receive infrastructural support. To read how the NCOs of the 386th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron are upgrading the kennels that serve to facilitate the battle, click [HERE](#).

REDHORSE Also Getting Job Done in Peru. To read how an Air Force civil engineer team has provided outstanding support to a joint US-Peru humanitarian effort, click [HERE](#).

Bagram Dining Facility Named for Airman. To read why a dining facility at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, has been named for a deceased Airman, click [HERE](#).

Hurricane Hunters Fully Engaged. The Airmen of the Air Force Reserve Command's 403rd Wing's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron are currently keeping a close eye on the Atlantic as this year's hurricane season heats up. To read how this group of Airmen is tracking Hurricane Bertha, click [HERE](#).

Wildfire Maintainers. The Guard's wildfire war continues on many fronts. To read how ANG maintainers have performed critical duty in keeping aircraft aloft, click [HERE](#).

Vandenberg AFB Firefighters Join the Fray. To read how the firefighters from Vandenberg's 30th Civil Engineer Squadron lent a hand against the wildfires, click [HERE](#).

COMMENTARY

Back to Basics. Air Education and Training Command (AETC) Commander, General Stephen R. Lorenz says when faced with challenging times, the soundest action is to revert to the basics—Air Force Corps Values. To read the general's commentary, click [HERE](#).

Seek Leadership Opportunities. To read the commentary of a commander who urges Airmen to jump at the opportunity to lead, click [HERE](#).

The Air Force Song. A Command Chief from Travis Air Force Base captures the meaning of the Air Force Song and its importance to all Airmen. To read the chief's insightful commentary, click [HERE](#).

GROWING AFSA: Commit to one new member and one renewal

Fellow AFSA members, I consider membership in our Association a conviction and a privilege. A privilege because we have been in our great Air Force (or associated with it in some manner) to be eligible for AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION membership. Conviction because membership requires considerable thought to joining our fellow Airmen with the "Voice of the Total Enlisted Force." Your Association is totally committed to preventing the erosion of benefits while enhancing the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of dedicated Americans who preserve our precious freedoms every day. I am asking you to make a conviction to make your voice stronger right now: recruit at least one new member and renew another. Each of us knows a friend, co-worker, relative, or neighbor that is, or was, Air Force. They are all eligible for the privilege of helping those who served, are serving, and will serve. Together, we can make a convicted difference. Thank you very much your military service and membership in your AFSA.

Submitted by Doc McCauslin, AFSA International President (totally committed!)

AFSA Member Services and Benefits

Show someone you care... use your exclusive AFSA members-only discount with FTD

AFSA members can automatically save up to 15% OFF floral and gift purchases by clicking the FTD.com link on the AFSA Web site: www.hqafsa.org, by calling (800) SEND-FTD and giving promo code 4578. When using FTD to send your flowers and gifts you are assured of the highest level of quality and service. FTD uses a nationwide network of florists to deliver fresh flower arrangements right to your door, often in the same day. We are passionate about flowers and dedicated to delivering the best customer service in the florist industry.

Your Air Force Sergeants Association has partnered with a wide range of service providers, retailers, and suppliers to create exclusive members-only specials and extended services. Take advantage of the benefits of your AFSA membership today! Log onto www.hqafsa.org for a complete list of "Exclusive Member Services."

For access to the "click HERE" links, please visit www.hqafsa.org