



# AFSA NEWSLETTER

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

May 23, 2008

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What a week on Capitol Hill!

Legislators responded to your calls, letters and e-mails as they worked education benefit reform, the supplemental war funding bill and other issues before Memorial Day.

We close out this addition of the newsletter with the last in our series of Memorial Day thoughts from you, our members. We thank everyone that shared their inspiring words.

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**Senate removes controversial parts of war supplemental funding bill and sends back to the House.**

The supplemental war funding legislation saw debate, amendments offered, political maneuvering and minor revision before the Senate sent it (H.R. 2642) back to the House of Representatives. Legislators had hoped to have this approved before the Memorial Day, but it became clear by the end of the day on Thursday this would not happen. The administration has repeatedly said it will veto the bill if it exceeded \$108 billion and as it stands now this one does. It includes a revised GI Bill provision and passed by a wide margin. We anticipate action in the House after its members return on June 2nd.

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**Education Benefit Reform.** On May 22nd Sen. Akaka, Chairman, Veterans Affairs Committee made the following statement regarding the supplemental war funding bill that currently includes S.22. "If the bill is vetoed and Congress fails to override the veto, I will bring Senator Webb's New GI Bill before the Veterans' Affairs Committee during our markup next month and urge that the Committee favorably report it to the Senate. It is time to give those young servicemembers, stepping forward voluntarily and putting themselves in harm's way, an opportunity for quality educational assistance. We must make good on our promise of an education in return for serving honorably in our military. I am committed to seeing this legislation become law."

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**Progress made on the Issue of MGIB Transferability.** Sen. Warner, working with Sen. Webb, Sen. Hagel, Sen. Levin and Sen. Akaka filed an amendment to make a technical adjustment to S. 22., the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act," to include a provision providing a 2-year pilot program of transferability. Although not as comprehensive as AFSA would have liked, it is a step in the right direction and opens the door for broader application in the future. We'll continue to report on this as more details become available.

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**Editor's Note on Memorial Day:** Please pause to remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms we enjoy on this special day and always.

Those we honor on Memorial Day did not fight for the pay, the domination of others, or the glory. They did so simply to fulfill their duty. They did not yearn to be heroes; they yearned to see mom and dad again; to hold their sweethearts and to watch their children grow.

We rely on today's generation of service members to preserve our safety, security and freedom. They need our constant support as they carry on the responsibility shared by millions of Americans who have answered this call to duty since this Nation was founded.

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## RECENTLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION

**H.CON.RES.32**, the "Honoring the members of the United States Air Force who were killed in the June 25, 1996, terrorist bombing of the Khobar Towers United States military housing compound near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia." Introduced by Rep Jeff Miller, R-FL, originally introduced in Jan 07; was passed by the House on 20 May 08 and has moved to the Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

**H.RES.986**, "Recognizing the courage and sacrifice of those members of the United States Armed Forces who were held as prisoners of war during the Vietnam conflict and calling for a full accounting of the 1,729 members of the Armed Forces who remain unaccounted for from the Vietnam conflict" originally introduced by Rep John Boehner, R-OH, 14 Feb 08. Passed and agreed to 22 May 08 by roll call of 394-0.

**H.R.2642**, the "Making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes" originally introduced by Rep Chet Edwards, R-TX is now, "Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (the war supplemental funding bill).

**S.2142**, the "Veterans Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2008," originally introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-OH, would require (current law authorizes) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse certain veterans without a service-connected disability enrolled as active participants of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care plan for the cost of emergency treatment received in a non-VA facility until such time as such veterans are transferred to a VA or other federal facility. This is moving forward and was placed on the Senate legislative calendar. Similar progress was made on the companion bill, H.R.3819.

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## GENERAL NEWS

**Memorial Day Message from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.** Admiral Mullen speaks of the blood spilt of those that paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country as the hardest currency--once spent never to be recouped, a debt we can never truly fully repay. To read his entire message, click [HERE](#).

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**101 Critical Days of Summer.** The season is upon us and summer activities potentially expose us to increased risk of mishaps. Success in reducing preventable mishaps depends on strong leadership, effective training, looking out for each other, and maintaining a warfighter edge at all times. To read the entire letter from Secretary Wynne and Gen Moseley click [HERE](#).

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**Airman's Roll Call.** The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a long-term retirement saving plan, which everyone should consider. It is a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans. To read about TSP and the entire Roll Call, click [HERE](#).

**VA Secretary Focuses on Continuum of Care.** Five months after taking the helm of the nation's second-largest Cabinet department, the secretary of veterans affairs laid out his priorities and talked of transitioning the organization to meet the needs of veterans today as well as those of the next generation. Click [HERE](#) for the rest of the Armed Forces Press Service article.

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**Wearing Your Medals: A Statement of Patriotism.** The Veterans Pride campaign was launched to promote veterans wearing their military medals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and the Fourth of July. Beginning with Veterans Day 2006, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) joined with major veterans service organizations to bring veterans together across the country in a symbolic demonstration of unity and patriotism. For more information on this program, click [HERE](#).

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**National Memorial Day Concert, "A Time to Remember, to Heal and Bring our Nation Together."** On Sunday, May 25, 2008, The National Memorial Day Concert, will presented live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol and pay special tribute to the veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam as well as the valiant warriors from today's battlefields. It will be broadcast on PBS 8:00 – 9:30 PM Eastern Time (check local listings for times in your area).

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**Memorial Day Ceremony at the Women's Memorial.** The ceremony will be held May 26, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. It is open to the public and includes formal military honors, a keynote address and personal tributes to departed comrades. For more information, call 703-533-1155 or 800-222-2294.

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**AFA & AFSA Announce Memorial Day Ceremony at Air Force Memorial.** The Air Force Association and Air Force Sergeants Association will host a 9 a.m. wreath laying ceremony Monday, May 26, 2008, at the Air Force Memorial. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley is the keynote speaker at this ceremony, which is open to the public. For more information about this event, contact Pete Lindquist at 703-979-0674 or [pindquist@airforcememorial.org](mailto:pindquist@airforcememorial.org).

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## **National Moment of Remembrance**

In an effort to put the "Memorial" back into Memorial Day, Congress established the White House Commission on Remembrance to promote the National Moment of Remembrance. Each year, at 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, Americans are asked to participate in an act of remembrance and national unity by pausing for a Moment to remember the more than one million of their fellow citizens who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

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## **Fourth and Final in the Series: Shared Memorial Day Thoughts**

We asked our Air Force Sergeants Association members and newsletter readers to share their thoughts and emotions about who they will remember on Memorial Day, especially how they will observe the Moment. Here is a sampling of those letters:

**SSgt Mary Maggolino - WA State NCO of the Year Western Air Defense Sector Washington ANG, McChord AFB:** Memorial Day has always meant something special to me. Growing up it meant putting out the flag and remembering those soldiers who died for our freedom. It also meant the first camping trip of the year, my birthday, and that school would soon be out for the summer. As an adult and Airman, it means more than just those things. As a member of the armed services, it now feels like each loss is like a loss from my own family. I can better understand the sacrifices that each and every member who serves this

great county make in order to preserve what we so often take for granted. Freedom to serve or not as well as the freedom to have choices in our every day lives. Memorial Day is a time to reflect and remember the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airman, and service workers whose families have also suffered incredible losses. It is a time to pay respect and to never ever forget. This Memorial Day my family and I will be observing the National Moment of remembrance by taking a moment of silence and proudly displaying our American Flag.

**SSgt Robert Sandbothe - AFSA 1379 FTA, 129th Rescue Wing, Chapter 1379, California ANG, Moffett Field:** "Memorial day is a time to remember and thank the men and women who serve or have previously served in the United States military; remember those who gave their lives serving their country and thank those who risked their lives and continue to do so today."

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## AFSA WIRELESS SPECIALS

Don't miss the fantastic promotions offered at the AFSA wireless center starting Wednesday, May 21 @ 12:01 am (EST) and running for the next two weeks (through midnight June 4). They're all great gift ideas for Father's Day or Graduation, so AFSA Members take advantage of these exclusive member's-only deals:

### T-Mobile

- Buy a BlackBerry Pearl and get a Free 1GB Kingston SD memory card.
- Buy a Samsung A737 and get a Free Samsung Bluetooth Headset.
- Buy a Nokia 6133 and get a Free Nokia Bluetooth Headset.

### AT&T

- Buy a Samsung Blast and get a Samsung Bluetooth Headset.
- Buy a SonyEricsson w580i and get a Free Plantronics Bluetooth Headset.
- Buy a BlackBerry Pearl and get a Free 1GB Kingston SD memory card.

### SPRINT

- Buy HTC Touch or HTC Mogul and get Free Universal Charger
- Buy a BlackBerry Pearl and get a Free 1GB Kingston SD memory card.
- Buy HTC touch and get a Free Technocel TS6b Bluetooth Headset

### NEXTEL

- Buy a Nextel i850 and get a Free Plantronics 2.5mm Corded Headset!

To take advantage of these AFSA members-only specials go to [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org), or to [www.afsamobile.org](http://www.afsamobile.org), 866-416-3060

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