

20081025 Retiree News

1. **The Promise.** **Retiree News** will contain information about benefits, National Guard events, and news about retired or former members. There will be no chain e-mail, cute pictures, or sales pitches. I publish **Retiree News** on a random schedule – as topics come up and time permits. If you change your mind about receiving issues of **Retiree News**, send me an e-mail at retireenews@hawaiiintel.net and I will remove you from the **Retiree News** mailing list.

2. **Business.**

- Federal retirees in the Civil Service Retirement System will receive a 5.8 percent increase to their pension checks in 2009, the highest increase since 1982. The government unveiled next year's cost-of-living allowance on Thursday. It is based on the change in the Labor Department's Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners from the third quarter of one year to the same quarter of the next. The 5.8 percent boost marks the largest increase for federal retirees since 1982, when the CPI rose 8.7 percent. In 2008, CSRS retirees received an increase of 2.3 percent.

The adjustment will not be the same for retirees in the newer Federal Employees Retirement System. If the change in the CPI is more than 3 percent, FERS retirees get the COLA minus 1 percent. So FERS members will get a 4.8 percent adjustment next year. FERS retirees also receive Social Security benefits, which are adjusted by the 5.8 percent change in the CPI. FERS is more dependent on government matching contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan, a 401(k)-style retirement investment vehicle for federal employees. As a result, FERS retirees sometimes get smaller COLAs, and they receive the cost-of-living allowance only if they are 62 or older.

CSRS annuitants must have been retired one full year to receive the full COLA. If they do not meet that threshold, they receive prorated annuities, amounting to one-twelfth of the applicable increase for each month they have received their pension.

The 5.8 percent figure does not apply to active federal employees, who receive a pay hike determined by Congress and approved by the president. In late September, the president signed a stopgap funding measure granting federal employees a 3.9 percent pay increase in 2009.

Federal retirees will receive their first checks reflecting the increase in January 2009.

(Taken from several news sources)

- Army Secretary Announces 2009 Will Be 'Year of NCO'. WASHINGTON, October 6, 2008. The Army will recognize the value of its enlisted leaders at all levels of command as it observes "The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer" in 2009, Army Secretary Pete Geren said today. Geren made the announcement during his keynote address at the opening of the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition here. "At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer," he said. "They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their soldiers."

The secretary said that during the year, the Army will develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability and use of the NCO corps, showcase the NCO story to the Army

and the American people, and honor the sacrifices and celebrate contributions of the NCO corps, past and present. "Today's NCO operates autonomously, and always with confidence and competence," he said. "Our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCO in the world, and most advanced armies in the world today are going to school on our model."

- I received an e-mail from [Col Daniel Au](#) about the availability and their eligibility to use of MWR facilities. Colonel Au served as the Property and Fiscal Officer for many years, and earlier as the [154th Supply Squadron](#) commander at the then [154th Fighter Group](#). Great hearing from Colonel Au!

My name is Daniel Au, a Hawaii National Guard retiree. I now volunteer my time at the Fort Shafter Arts and Crafts pottery shop. We have a terrific facility including a well-equipped wood shop, a mold pouring ceramic studio, a quilting studio, a stain glass shop, and a wheel throwing pottery studio. Along with active duty personnel, National Guard members, their dependents, and Federal DoD employees, both active and retired are eligible to use the facility. Fees are nominal for a facility where you may pursue your avocation, meet and interact with other military and DoD craft people, and have an enjoyable time in the process.

The facility is open Fridays 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, Saturdays 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, and Sundays 11:00 am to 4:30 pm.

This notice is published to insure that you are informed about this incentive that is available to you because of your dedicated service to our country. For more information, you may call 839-2967 or 4381071/1315 during the open hours. You may also e-mail your inquiries to aud002@hawaii.rr.com or albertine.butler@us.army.mil

- Traffic Warning. You will face some parking challenges if you're planning a shopping trip to the Hickam AFB commissary and/or Base Exchange on October 31 through November 3, 2008. The [50th Annual Hickam AFB Carnival](#) is that weekend, and it will be in the Burger King parking lot next to the commissary and exchange. Be forewarned! (Basic information taken from the Hickam AFB base bulletin – warning is mine.)

- Two New Military Handbooks Available. Military Handbooks has announced the release of two new 2008 free handbooks for military personnel, the 2008 After the Military Handbook and the 2008 Veterans Healthcare Benefits Handbook. These handbooks, written specifically for military service members, include a variety of information about benefits, education, and transitioning from the military. To receive your own copies of these handbooks, simply go to our website - <http://www.militaryhandbooks.com>

2008 Veterans Healthcare Handbook. This unique handbook, written for veterans, gives you everything you need to know about: how to apply for healthcare, veterans service centers, choosing a facility, changing a facility, second opinions, prescriptions, dental care, chiropractic care, non-VA care, travel, POW benefits, appeals, grievances, confidentiality, financial issues, means testing, hardship determinations, waivers, medication co-payments, health insurance, listing of VA facilities, and much, much more!

2008 After the Military Handbook. This unique handbook, written for military veterans, covers: transitioning to the private sector, supporting your family, finding a job that pays "top dollar", choosing between jobs with large or small companies, deciding to start your own company, maximizing the benefits of a military career, medical benefits and life insurance in the private

sector, how to pay for college after you leave military service, how to retire successfully, and more.

(Thanks to several retirees who forwarded this information to me.)

- Hawaii Superferry Offers a Military Deal. Now is a great time to travel between Oahu and Maui with the Hawaii Superferry. Military and their dependents get a great rate and can bring along a second passenger FREE!

One Free Military passenger round trip fare with purchase of military passenger round trip fare traveling at the same time. Free fare does not include taxes and fees. Some restrictions apply. Good for travel booked and traveled by Dec 15, 2008. Rates are subject to change. Offer is not good on Internet booking.

For more information go to: www.hawaiisuperferry.com, or call 1-877-443-3779.

(Thanks to [Lorna Souza](#), the HIANG Family Readiness Coordinator for this information)

- More ID Card Info. If the member is previously divorced and are planning to get an ID for his/her new spouse, they also need to bring in the divorce decree. A copy will be made to ascertain potential benefits due the former spouse. Thanks to [TSgt Fred Hyun](#), former HIANG member for passing this on. AND Congratulations to Fred on his recent summer marriage.

- OPM Announces Open Season for Health Benefits. Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management today announced premiums and benefits in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), which covers approximately 8 million federal employees, retirees and their dependents. Federal employees and retirees can choose from among 269 health-plan options to be offered in the 2009 FEHB, including 10 nationwide fee-for-service options that are available to all enrollees and 27 High Deductible Health Plans.

Enrollees with self-only coverage will pay, on average, \$4.83 more each pay period (about \$125 per year) next year. Family coverage will cost an average \$11.12 more per pay period. FEHB enrollees pay - on average - 30 percent of the total cost of a plan's premium, while the government pays 70 percent.

This year's Open Season begins November 10 and runs through December 8, 2008, giving employees the opportunity to change or add to their portfolio of health- and family-care insurance products. In 2009, 10 fee-for-service plans and a number of Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) will expand coverage of hearing benefits for adults. This enhancement follows OPM's challenge last year to health carriers - which a number accepted - to improve the coverage of diagnostic tests and hearing aids for children in 2008.

Often cited as a model health-care system, the FEHB Program is not immune to external factors that influence the cost of medical care. In fact, two private studies predict medical costs next year will rise between 9.6 percent and 10.6 percent, with the aging population, the rise of prescription drug costs and patient demand for services fueling much of the increase.

Next year's rise in the average FEHB premium is significantly less than rate hikes some are predicting for large, employer-sponsored private-sector programs. Premiums, including the government share and the enrollee share, will increase an average 7.0 percent next year. Overall, the average enrollee share of the premium will increase 7.9 percent. Twenty percent of

FEHB enrollees would see their share of premiums rise by less than 5.0 percent, based on 2008 enrollment data.

"One hallmark of the FEHB Program is 'a choice', meaning employees and retirees can use the Open Season to shop among plans and, perhaps, move to one that better meets their medical and financial needs," said Kay Ely, OPM's Associate Director for Human Resources Products and Services. OPM conducts an annual Open Season to give federal employees and retirees the opportunity to select a new health plan; during the Open Season, current federal employees who are not enrolled may elect FEHB coverage. The Open Season also gives employee and retirees the chance to select supplemental dental and/or vision coverage.

The Open Season also gives employees the opportunity to elect coverage under a tax-deferred Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for health care and/or dependent care, or to adjust an existing FSA. Current FSA enrollees must re-enroll for coverage in 2009 during the Open Season. In 2007, nearly 246,000 individuals had a Flexible Spending Account. By law, retirees are not eligible for FSA benefits.

The Open Season also can be used by employees and retirees to enroll in supplemental dental and/or vision insurance coverage. In 2008 - in only its second year of availability - the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) had more than 1 million enrollments.

Each Open Season, OPM publishes the popular *Guide to Federal Benefits*. This year, it identifies 42 FEHB carriers for their best practices on health-care cost and quality transparency. OPM also will unveil a new Federal Benefits website (www.opm.gov/insure), which will let enrollees look at their overall health-related coverages and give them a better understanding of the coordination of benefits between, for instance, the FEHB Program and the supplemental dental/vision coverage. (Taken from an OPM press release.)

- Rules of Engagement (ROE). Periodically, someone e-mails me requesting the e-mail address of another retiree. I forward the e-mail with the address request to the retiree for their action. This preserves the privacy of the retiree and their e-mail address.

3. The Wanted List. Help! I am still looking for these Hawaii National Guard members e-mail addresses or their addresses I have for them no longer works. E-mail me their addresses if you can share them.

Tom Gresch
Haruo Shigezawa
James Carpenter
Loni Mahi
Edward Uyeda
Joseph Rayray
Woody Batula
David Cowen
Dennis Hui
Roy Kudo
Ron Biho
Wayne Z. Higa
Eugene Imai

Joseph Damiani
Chris Wilson
Laura Jones
Herman Lau
Randy Solomon
Russell Woodward
Byron Kim
Steve Ware
James "Mike" Doolin
Katherine Asato
Richard Kudo
Royden Horibe
Jeffrey Okazaki

Following are the new or updated e-mail addresses sent in by the individuals or **Retiree News** readers – Mahalo for adding or updating your e-mail address.

Dewey Arakawa (update)
Arthur Loebel
Stephanie Hika
Gordon Fujimoto
Dwayne Caspillo
James Pestana
Wally Tasaka
John Lacio

George Cho
Jeffrey Waechter (update)
Karen Craig (CSM, AZ ARNG)
Robert Adachi
Garret Medeiros
Craig Sullivan
Gayle Tom

AND – I am still looking for more Hawaii National Guard members. Since I started my State job working at Ft Ruger, the **Retiree News** distribution list has increased dynamically. The address total just passed **825+** members. A majority of the increase is from the Hawaii Army National Guard members who added their e-mail address to the list. Be sure to ask your fellow retirees that you meet if they receive **Retiree News**. If not, send their e-mail address to me. Mahalo!

4. Condolences. These Hawaii National Guard retirees passed away recently. They all served honorably and added something to our unique culture here in the Guard. Aloha Pumehana to all....

None this issue

5. Retiree Update.

- New HIARNG Command Sergeant Majors. The Army National Guard Command Sergeant Board convened on September 15, 2008. The board considered highly qualified non-commissioned officer for appointment to Command Sergeant Major. Among the 110 NCOs selected were four members of the Hawaii Army National Guard. Congratulations to each of them on their selection to Command Sergeant Major!

MSG Robert Balatico

Send congratulatory e-mail: robert.balatico@us.army.mil

MSG Miles Ishizaki

Send congratulatory e-mail: miles.ishizaki@us.army.mil

SGM Elizabeth Kenui

Send congratulatory e-mail: elizabeth.kenui@us.army.mil

SGM Charles Pieters

Send congratulatory e-mail: charles.l.pieters@us.army.mil

- The ANG Exceptional Promotion Program. The Command Chief Master Sergeant – Hawaii, **CM Sgt Denise Jelinski-Hall** sent out e-mail about those selected for promotion under the Exceptional Promotion Program. This ANG program allows for the promotion of deserving members whose military position does not allow for promotion to chief or senior master sergeant grades. This program permits members to hold their grade for two years before they must retire or find a position with the corresponding rank. Congratulations to all four selectees!

It gives me great pleasure to announce the following individuals have been selected for promotion under the Exceptional Promotion Program. Please join me in congratulating four of our finest! Job-well-done!

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Recommended for SMSgt: [SMSgt Alan Bergeson](#), HQ, Hawaii Air National Guard
Recommended for SMSgt: [MSgt Everett Ferreira](#), 154th Security Forces Squadron
Recommended for SMSgt: [MSgt Melvin Shinohara](#), 154th Communications Flight
Recommended for SMSgt: [MSgt Paul Kamakawiwoole](#), 154th Maintenance Operations Flight

Send congratulatory e-mail using this format: firstname.lastname@hihick.ang.af.mil

• Mahalo and Aloha to the [Headquarters, Hawaii Air National Guard](#) staff! They supported the promotion ceremony for [Brig Gen Stanley Osserman](#) and it was another outstanding event. The ceremony was in the Governor's Ceremonial Room with [Governor Linda Lingle](#) and [Mrs. Betty Osserman](#) doing the pinning honors. The luncheon following was super. Send congratulatory e-mail: stanley.osserman@hihick.ang.af.mil

Attending General Osserman's ceremony were some "long lost" Guardmembers.

- [Lt Col Robert Konishi](#) was there. He served as the CBPO Chief and in the Human Resources Office. In his speech, StanO mentioned that Bob was the one who encouraged him to join the Guard way back when. First time I had seen Bob in many years, and he still looks great!

- Catching up with Bob Konishi at the luncheon was [Brig Gen Allen Mizumoto](#) and his wife, [Miriam](#). I had a short conversation with the general and he's doing great in retirement. Great seeing the Mizumotos!

- Flying in from Colorado was [Lt Col Robert Ryan](#), who flew with StanO in the [203rd Air Refueling Squadron](#). Know they are great friends! Good seeing Bob after many years!

- I saw [Lt Col Clarence Fukumoto](#) at the pinning ceremony but didn't get to talk to him. I believe that Clarence still works for the state.

- I took a photo of [Col Clint Churchill](#) and [Lt Col Robbie "Bizzare" Robinson](#), who were there to congratulate StanO. I had not seen Robbie for a long time, but he still looks great. Church continues with the James Campbell Company and the Pacific Aviation Museum.

- [Lt Col Tracey Saiki](#) was there. She continues to serve in the Air Force Reserve, and works fulltime with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Super catching up with Tracey!

- Retired HIANG member, [Maj Steven Berg](#), got there a little late – teaching a class at Hawaii Pacific University – to join his wife, [Brig Gen Kathleen Berg](#). Steve is now Dr. Berg and teaches mathematics. General Berg is Dr. Berg in her civilian job at the University of Hawaii. Great husband and wife team!

- Smiling and catching up with everyone was [Lt Col Susan Higgins](#) and her husband [Bob](#). Both of them are fully retired, and do volunteer work in the community. Great seeing both Higgins!

- Another retiree I have not seen in a long time was [Lt Col Harold "Ninja" Fujii](#). Harold was there with his wife, [Lorenne](#). I have known Ninja since our enlisted days in the maintenance squadron.

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● Hawaii Air National Guard First Sergeant Council. The Command Chief Master Sergeant – Hawaii, **CMSgt Denise Jelinski-Hall** sent out the following announcement about the HIANG First Sergeant Council (FSC).

It gives me great pleasure to announce the new HIANG First Sergeant Council leadership team. Congratulations on your selection! Thank you for continuing to place the care of our Airmen as your top priority - job #1. We look to your leadership in ensuring a ready and reliable enlisted force; taking care of Airmen has never been more important. Congratulations again and thank you for your commitment to the team!

- President: **MSgt LeeAnn Uehara**, 297th Air Traffic Control Squadron
- Vice President: **MSgt Edward Samson**, 293^d Combat Communications Squadron
- Recorder: **MSgt Jeffrey Romualdo**, 154th Medical Group

Send congratulatory e-mail using this format: firstname.lastname@hihick.ang.af.mil

We also want to take this opportunity to thank the past FSC leadership team. Thank you for guiding the Council and for providing your steadfast leadership and mentorship. Job-well-done!!! You set a higher standard for our Airmen to aspire to and showed them the path to success. Continue to demonstrate our warrior ethos: Wingman - Leader - Warrior. Mahalo Nui Loa for being an American Airmen!

- Past President - **MSgt Maui Quizon**, Hq 154th Wing
- Past Vice President - **SMSgt Vernon Palomares**, 154th Maintenance Group
- Past Recorder: **MSgt LeeAnn Uehara**, 297th Air Traffic Control Squadron

Send congratulatory e-mail using this format: firstname.lastname@hihick.ang.af.mil

● Hawaii Air National Guard Top-3 Council. The Command Chief Master Sergeant – Hawaii, **CMSgt Denise Jelinski-Hall** sent out the following announcement about the HIANG Top-3 Council.

Please join in congratulating the newly elected Top-3 executive leadership team! We look forward to your leadership and energy on the council. Thank you for saying "yes" to serving on the Top-3 leadership team -- the next two years promise to be exciting for all SNCO's!

- President - **MSgt Ramon (Maui) Quizon**, 154th Maintenance Group
- Vice President - **MSgt Rob Joy**, HQ, 201st Combat Communications Group
- Treasurer - **MSgt Kelly Sunaoka**, Headquarters, 154th Wing
- Secretary - **MSgt Shawna Gaskins**, 154th Maintenance Group

Send congratulatory e-mail using this format: firstname.lastname@hihick.ang.af.mil

We also want to thank the past Top-3 executive leadership team for their contributions and leadership. Job-well-done...mahalo nui loa!

- Past President - **SMSgt Leilani Moniz**, Headquarters, 154th Wing
- Past Vice President - **SMSgt Ray Duropan**, 154th Security Forces Squadron
- Past Treasurer - **CMSgt Brian Tom**, Headquarters, 154th Wing
- Past Secretary - **SMSgt Carol Orr**, 154th Mission Support Flight.

Send congratulatory e-mail using this format: firstname.lastname@hihick.ang.af.mil

● I received an e-mail from **Chaplain Newton Kerney**, who served in the 201st **Combat Communications Group** in the 80s. He wrote in response to the mention of the HIARNG's marriage enrichment seminars ran by the Family Readiness Group. He questioned, "*Who was it that established the first Marriage Enrichment Seminars for the HIANG?*" It was in fact Chaplain Kerney. He went on to say, "Obviously, it looks like they have upgraded things from 20+ years ago." Great hearing from Chaplain Kerney!

6. Upcoming Events. Listed by event date, the events remain posted until they occur.

● There will be a retirement luncheon for **MSG Manuel "Manny" Viduya**. He retires after 27 years of service in several Hawaii Army National Guard units.

- When: Friday November 7, 2008

- Time: 1130-1600

- Where: Sea Breeze Restaurant, Hickam AFB

- Costs:

--- \$22.00 Food & gift

--- \$4.00 Gift only

- POCs:

--- **SGT Corinthia Lum**, 844-6004 or corinthia.lum@us.army.mil

--- **SPC Natalie Hayes**, 844-6369 or natalie.hayes1@us.army.mil

● The Hawaii National Guard Birthday Ball is on Saturday, December 13, 2008 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. This joint event celebrates the 372nd birthday of the National Guard's beginnings. The event Chair, **LTC Laura Soares**, and her committee are planning another superb ball. The evening will include dinner, entertainment and dancing. Last year's birthday ball was a fun and entertaining event.

The Sheraton Waikiki had blocked off some rooms for those who want to spend the night. The rooms are available at the government rate of \$198.17. Call 808 921-4611 to make your reservations. This room offer will end on November 13, 2008. The room offer closes early because the Honolulu Marathon is on Sunday, December 14, 2008, and the rest of the hotel is booked.

The specifics of the Hawaii National Guard Birthday Ball follow:

- When: Saturday, December 13, 2008

- Time: 1700-2300

- Where: Sheraton Waikiki Hotel – Maui & Kauai Ballrooms

- Dinner selections: *indicate your selection to your respective POC with your payment*

--- Macadamia nut pesto chicken breast with Marsala sauce & garlic potatoes

--- Roasted salmon, lemon spinach leaf & tomato basil coulis with Jasmine rice

--- New York steak with baked potato

- Costs:

--- E1-E4: \$48.00

--- E5-E7: \$60.00

--- E8-E9: \$72.00

--- WO1-CW3: \$72.00

--- CW4-CW5: \$84.00

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- O1-O3: \$72.00
- O4 and above: \$84.00
- Retirees: \$70.00
- Spouses and guests: same price as their military member or retiree
- Checks made out to: "[HING Birthday Ball](#)"
- Suspense for payment: Friday, November 28, 2008
- Attire:
 - Military: Best Dress
 - Civilians: Coat & tie
- POCs:
 - 29 IBCT: **SGM Paul Confer**, 844-6032 or paul.confer@us.army.mil
 - HHD-JFHQ: **MSG Vickie Kozel**, 672-1489 or vickie.kozel@us.army.mil
 - 103 TRP CMD: **CSM Ronald Oshiba**, 672-1752 or ronald.oshiba@us.army.mil
 - 298 RTI: **1SG Mark Victor**, 672-1807 or mark.victor@us.army.mil
 - HIANG: **Lt Col Merv Oyafuso**, 448-7253 or mervin.oyafuso@hick.af.mil
 - Retirees: **Galen Yoshimoto**, 672-1221 or galen.yoshimoto@us.army.mil