

200900604 Retiree News
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1. **The Promise.** **Retiree News** will contain information about benefits, National Guard events, and news about current, 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.**

- **Can You Donate Blood?** **WO1 Greg & 1SG Stephanie Hika's** 13-year old daughter Grace has been diagnosed with leukemia and is being treated at the Tripler Army Medical Center. Grace is in immediate need of blood donors for platelets and hemoglobin to help with clotting and to increase oxygen to her body. The Hika family is asking for your support during this difficult time. If you plan to donate blood, please go to the Tripler Army Medical Center, Oceanside, 2nd Floor blood bank. You may donate blood in the name of Grace Hika.

- **No TRICARE Fee Hike.** The Fiscal 2010 defense budget does not - repeat does not - contain a provision to increase the TRICARE fees for retired military personnel, unlike the past three defense budgets in which the Bush Administration tried to raise fees as one means to offset higher healthcare costs. According to Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Armed Services military personnel subcommittee, Defense Secretary Robert Gates intends "to fully fund military healthcare in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget and then engage Congress in a dialogue about what comes next." Congress shot down the three previous attempts to budget-in the TRICARE fee hikes, but last year, Davis indicated that some increase may be inevitable, however she said it should not be the only means employed to cut military healthcare costs.

- **Military Discounts.** This reference is taken from the Militay.com website. It references over 700 military discounts available. Please note that some of these discounts require you to provide your e-mail address. You will start receiving promotional e-mail from some of these companies.

<http://shock.military.com/DC/DealIndex.jsp?ESRC=airforce-a.nl>

- **Another Military Discount.** In the May issue of Honolulu Magazine, the advertisement for Tsukiji Fish Market and Restaurant at Ala Moana Center shows there is a 15% discount for those with a military ID.

- **Home Depot and Lowes offer military discounts.** I received the following e-mail from **CMSgt Melvin Taira** about ongoing military discounts at Home Depot and Lowes. Happy shopping!

-----Original Message-----

From: "mel tiara"

Date: June 3, 2009 12:25:11 HST

Subject: FW: Home Depot and Lowes

Home Depot and Lowes offer 10% discount to all military personnel, including retirees, year-round. You must tell the cashier you want the military discount, since they don't advertise it. The only time they'll advertise is during certain holidays, i.e., Memorial Day, and I expect them to advertise it for the 4 July holiday.

- **Air Guard Officer Training Program to Move.** The Air National Guard has decided to consolidate its officer training program conducted over the past 40 years at McGhee-Tyson ANGB, Tenn., with the active duty and Air Force Reserve officer training program at Maxwell AFB, Ala., reports **The Daily Times**. The last class of prospective Air Guard officers will graduate June 26, making nearly 15,000 graduates of the I.G. Brown Center. For a time, the Air Force Reserve also commissioned its officer through the Brown Center, but in 2007 shifted to Maxwell. The I.G. Brown Center celebrated its 40th anniversary last summer.

The following is in the complete article referenced from **The Daily Times**.

Officer program leaving air base

By [Robert Norris](#) The Daily Times, Maryville, Tennessee: May 20, 2009

The Air National Guard's officer commissioning program is moving from McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. Academy of Military Science students who started training Monday will be the last AMS class to graduate from the I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center. Their graduation is scheduled for June 26, when the AMS era at McGhee Tyson will culminate its 38 years with a special commissioning and farewell ceremony. To date, 14,545 have graduated from the academy; 96 are enrolled in the final class at the I.G. Brown Center.

"The reason we're moving the school is to consolidate resources with other commissioning programs," Maj. Ronald M. Daniels, AMS commandant, said Tuesday. Daniels and about 15 other AMS staff will move to their new duty post near Montgomery, Alabama, in July. He will serve as commander of a staff that will grow to 27. About 500 students are trained at AMS per year. "We've got a lot of good people we're taking with us," Daniels said.

While the transfer of AMS staff and students AMS to Maxwell -- home of the Air University of the Air Force -- will mean a loss of personnel at McGhee Tyson ANGB, it's a case of one step back and one step forward. What the base is losing in officer training numbers, it will regain in non-commissioned officer training, the roots of the Training and Education Center.

Col. Edmund C. Morrissey Jr., first commander of the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy established at McGhee Tyson in 1968, was the driving force behind development of the Preparatory Academy that was later named the Academy of Military Science.

The Paul H. Lankford Enlisted Professional Military Education Center -- the NCO Academy named after noted Maryvillian Chief Master Sgt. Paul Lankford of Maryville -- will increase its staff by 15 instructors. This will allow an estimated 600 more students per year to be trained at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy and Airman Leadership School.

Daniels said he is eager to take on the new challenge at Maxwell, but will have fond memories of his time at McGhee Tyson, where he has been assigned since July 2005. "I love East Tennessee. I love going to UT football games," he said. Daniels said he will particularly miss working alongside the other units based at McGhee Tyson and expressed his appreciation for the support given AMS by the 134th Air Refueling Wing. "We're going to miss the relationships."

Shared experiences

The Air Guard and the Air Force are looking for benefits to accrue from their future officers interacting at a single training site. "We're going to consolidate resources with other commissioning programs. The main goal is to develop a situation where officer candidates can work together and develop shared experiences." He said the Air Force and Air Guard have determined that officers who come to the military by different paths will be better prepared for their future mission if they share a common point of reference. "We can all gain by diversity -- not just in race, creed or color -- but obviously, we are more effective when we are all put together into an outstanding force," Daniels said.

The AMS is the fourth commissioning source for the Air Force, along with the Air Force Academy, ROTC and the Officer Training School based at Maxwell Air Force Base. The academy's training programs will be separate -- as a detachment of the Air National Guard -- from the Officer Training School and the ROTC trainees at Maxwell, but eventually there will be more coordination between the units, Daniels said. "We have some initiatives we're working on. Obviously, we will use the Air Force curriculum and facilities. We'll use the firing range and the exercise center, but initially we won't do it all together."

The most important thing? "The mission."

- No Unique Gulf War Illness Symptoms, DoD Says. Defense and Veterans Affairs department officials say there is no Gulf War "syndrome," and that there is nothing unique about the symptoms one in four Desert Storm veterans say they suffer. And while a review by the Institute of Medicine concluded that veterans do have symptoms, the review says they are not out of the ordinary. That sums up the major obstacles to diagnosing and treating ill veterans of the 1991 war, officials told lawmakers in the first of three planned congressional hearings about Gulf War illness.

"We do believe that Gulf War illnesses are real - but there is no unique set of symptoms," said Craig Postlewaite, deputy director of force readiness and health assurance under the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. He based that view on an IOM study that concluded veterans' symptoms vary too much to be seen as unique and recommended no further epidemiological studies. "We feel like their assessment is complete," Postlewaite said.

However, researchers from the congressionally mandated Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses say that not only is there a series of symptoms that make up a definable illness, but that they know what caused that illness. "They have the same types and patterns of excess symptoms," said Lea Steele, immediate past scientific director for the committee. "Our review provides a clear conclusion." She said the research shows that veterans who took the largest amount of pyridostigmine bromide - anti-nerve-agent pills - and used the most insect repellent, including flea collars, were the most likely to suffer from the cluster of symptoms of known as Gulf War illness.

Victims of the sarin gas attacks in Tokyo as well as animal studies produced the same cluster of symptoms the service members have, she said. The pills, pesticides and nerve agent are similar chemicals, so it appears that troops essentially overdosed. "Clearly, we need to get the research right," said Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio. "And the need to get it right is urgent."

James Bunker, who served as an artillery officer in the war, provided an example of why. Bunker had a history of rushing through high school in three years, a great love of chess and an aptitude for math. But during the hearing, he stumbled over words and a piece of paper in his

hands shook as he read his testimony. He no longer plays chess because he lacks the cognitive ability to plan out his moves.

After deploying with the 5th Field Artillery Regiment, he said his unit's chemical alarms sounded. Soon after, he developed breathing problems, muscle twitches, leg cramps, vomiting and convulsing. He was given an antidote for nerve agent and sent home to a hospital. Now, he has nerve problems in his right leg and has lost the use of his right arm. He suffers headaches, cognitive dysfunction, gastric reflux disease, fibromyalgia, mouth sores, skin rashes and sinusitis. "It's hard to live a life where you can be talking to someone normally one minute and the next you can't make a sentence to save your life," Bunker said. "Often, VA tells me this is all in my head or it's depression."

Paul Sullivan, executive director of Veterans for Common Sense, said sick veterans want to know why they're sick, where they can get treatment, and that their healthcare and benefits will be paid for by the country that sent them to war. "VA should publicly recognize our illnesses," he said. Sullivan asked that VA be investigated to see if the IOM study was properly conducted. Congress mandated that study, but VA limited its scope to exclude animal studies and research where exposure dosage was unknown.

But no one kept track of how much anti-nerve agent troops took or measured the amount of sarin they were exposed to when the military blew up a massive Iraqi chemical depot just after the 1991 war, so exposure dosage was unknown. The advisory committee on Gulf War illnesses included animal studies and research where the dosage was unknown.

Steele said about half of troops who deployed for the 1991 war took anti-nerve agent pills and used personal pesticides such as DEET, and were also exposed to sarin. "We have no indication that any of them experienced any acute symptoms of exposure," Postlewaite said. "What about Bunker?" asked Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn. "As you know, there are many reasons for seizures," Postlewaite said, noting that current troops would again be given anti-nerve agent pills if battlefield commanders determined a need for them. Sullivan also asked for training so VA doctors would be familiar with Gulf War illness — and that they be told it's not a mental health condition.

Richard Weidman, executive director for policy and government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America, asked that the government keep track of where current service members are located in the combat zones, and that VA include in their medical records a query of where veterans were located when they were deployed. As it stands, there's no way to look for patterns, he said. For example, if 30 veterans who all served in Baghdad develop brain cancer, VA would have no way to know whether this was a group that might have been exposed to a particular toxin. "This is nuts," Weidman said.

In one medical unit, he said, seven out of 150 people developed multiple sclerosis after serving in Desert Storm. "It's astronomical. It doesn't happen by chance." And it's almost impossible to spot if no one keeps track of who served where, he said. "If you don't have the stats, you don't have a problem," Weidman said, implying that VA doesn't want to know if there's a problem.

"We have been and continue to be very concerned about these veterans' health issues," insisted Lawrence Deyton, chief public health and environmental hazards officer for VA's Veterans Health Administration. Deyton said Gulf War veterans experience symptoms at a rate 25 percent higher than veterans of that era who did not deploy. But he acknowledged that VA

could do better and said new VA Secretary Eric Shinseki has begun efforts to develop a simpler procedure for veterans to quickly and easily get benefits for service-connected ailments.

Congress decided to hold the series of hearings because of the new reports from the IOM and the research advisory committee, as well as the change in VA leadership. Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs oversight and investigations panel, said many questions still need to be answered. In the end, Mitchell said, "We still don't know how to respond to Gulf War veterans who ask: 'Why am I sick? Will I get well again?' "

- 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.

- Disclaimer. The views and opinions expressed in **Retiree News** are those of the editor and do not represent official policy of The Adjutant General or the State Department of Defense.

3. The Wanted List. Help! I am still looking for these Hawai'i 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.

Chris Wilson
Randy Solomon
Haruo Shigezawa
Tom Gresch
Ron Biho
Wayne Z. Higa

Joseph Damiani
Russell Woodward
Byron Kim
Steve Ware
Katherine Asato
Edward Uyeda

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.

Melvin Morris (update)
George Okuma
James Blair
Kenrock Higa
Ronald Heim
W. Carl Gallegos

Calvin Chow (update)
Richard Tsuchiya
Rudy Luat
Cris Moku
Nick Sporik

AND – I am still looking for more Hawai'i 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 **1050+** members. 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 Hawai'i 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....

Cynthia Yee, passed away on May 16, 2009. She is survived by her husband, Patrick and sons, Gavin and Darren Yee, and Garrett Tagawa. Private services were held. Cindy just retired last summer after a long tenure in the Human Resources Office.

Masao Tamashiro, 74, of Honoka'a, Hawai'i, died May 16, 2009. Born in Honoka'a. Retired from Hamakua Sugar Co.; former member of the Hawai'i Army National Guard. Survived by wife, Suzanne "Suzie"; sons, Nolan and Darren; brothers, Minoru and Akira; sisters, Toshiko Hoshijo, Tomie Nakamura, Sueko Inouye and Sumie DelaRosa; grandchildren, Charley, Brennan and Noelle

5. Retiree Update.

- LTC Kenneth Hara Promotion Ceremony. The Commanding General, Hawaii Army National Guard requests the pleasure of your company at the Promotion Ceremony in honor of **Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth S. Hara**. The ceremony will be on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at 1400 at the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Classroom, Building 1898, Kalaeloa. The dress is duty uniform for military and aloha attire for civilians.

Please RSVP to Ms. Cathy Inouye at cathy.inouye@us.army.mil or 844-6029, if you plan to attend the ceremony.

Send congratulatory e-mail: kenneth.hara@ng.army.mil

- The Hawai'i Army National Guard makes it two years in a row for SAIGE Awards. **LTC Laura Wheeler** has won the Meritorious Service Award from the Society of American Indian government Employees (SAIGE). The award recognizes military members and Federal civilian employers who made significant contributions to our nation's Global War of Terrorism; demonstrated role model qualities and core values in executing their respective department's mission; and made noteworthy efforts in advancing opportunities for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. She was the winner representing the entire National Guard. Congratulations to Laura!

Last year's award winner was **SGT Phillip Cornejo**, another HIARNG member. In fact, the SAIGE organization was so impressed with SGT Cornejo, they invited him back this year to speak at their annual conference in San Diego. Another great honor for Phillip!

Special thanks to **Mr. Rex Jones**, the department's recently departed State Equal Employment Manager (SEEM). He wrote the winning nominations for both Laura and Phillip.

Send congratulatory e-mail: laura.wheeler@us.army.mil phillip.cornejo@us.army.mil

- Hawai'i Air National Guard deployments. Hawai'i Air National Guard units continue to support Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and Air Force mission requirements worldwide. Since the mid-nineties, the HIANG has supported these taskings through volunteers.

The following is a quick summary of HIANG personnel deployed. These tour lengths range from 120-179 days.

The 154th Security Forces Squadron continues its CENTAF support with about 30 personnel currently deployed. The squadron has had personnel deployed to the desert almost continuously since 9/11. The 201st Combat Communications Group has about 30 personnel also deployed in support of CENTAF. Other HUIANG units with personnel deployed in support of CENTAF include the 154th Operations Support Squadron, 169th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron, the 297th Air Traffic Control Squadron, and the 154th Communications Flight.

The HQ, 15th Wing has personnel support PACOM requirements. The 154th Services Flight and the 204th Airlift Squadron have personnel supporting USAFE requirements.

In June, about 70 members of the 201st Combat Communications Group will join others already deployed in support of CENTAF missions. The 154th Civil Engineer Squadron will deploy about 60 members. Joining them in smaller numbers will be members from the 154th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 154th Services Flight, 154th Medical Group, and the 154th Operations Support Squadron. Most of these deployments are for 179 days in the AOR.

The 199th Fighter Squadron will take part in two major exercises in the next few months. Both exercises will involve their F-15 Eagles, about 80 personnel and are about 30 days in length. The first group left a few days ago to San Diego. Later in the summer, they will be on the road again to Singapore.

In 2010, the 203rd Air Refueling Squadron will support Tanker Task Force requirements for SOUTHCOM and CENTCOM.

- Hawaii National Guard Support of Memorial Day Ceremonies. Both Hawaii Army and Air National Guard members supported the two major Memorial Day ceremonies. A Big Mahalo to all who supported these ceremonies!

The Mayor's Memorial Day celebration at Punchbowl was in the morning. Army Guard soldiers on Kauai and the Island of Hawaii collected lei from schools and transported them to the Aloha Cargo terminals. The F-15 Eagles from the 199th Fighter Squadron flew the mission man formation at the end of the morning's ceremony.

The Governor's Memorial Day ceremony was in the afternoon at the Hawaii State Veteran's Cemetery. An Army Guard soldier held the Hawaii State flag in the joint color guard. A CH-47D four ship conducted the flyover at the end of this ceremony. Members of both the Army and Air Guard were escorts and performed other essential support duties.

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

- Relinquishment of Command Ceremony. **Brig Gen Peter "Skipper" Pawling's** relinquishment of command ceremony will be on Saturday, June 6, 2009. **Lt Col Merv Oyafuso**, the 154th Wing Executive Officer, send out this e-mail.

-----Original Message-----

From: Oyafuso Mervin Lt Col HQ 154 WG/CCE [<mailto:mervin.oyafuso@hihick.ang.af.mil>]

Sent: Friday, May 22, 2009 12:47 PM

To: ALL HIANG

Subject: 154WG RELINQUISHMENT OF COMMAND INVITE_6 JUNE 2009

All,

You are cordially invited to attend 3 events on Saturday UTA, 6 June 2009 in honor of Brig Gen Peter S. Pawling:

1030 - C-17 Fini Flight arrival

1100 - Relinquishment of Command Ceremony

1140 - 2 Star Promotion Ceremony

Location is at Hickam Base Ops - DV Row.

Mervin H. Oyafuso, Lt Col, HIANG
HQ 154WG/Executive Officer
448-7270

- SFC Michael Nii Retirement Celebration. There will be a retirement celebration honoring **SFC Michael Nii**, who has served for over 27 years. The party specifics follow:

- When: Friday, June 19, 2009, 1130-1400
- Where: Hale Koa Hotel
- Menu: Luncheon buffet
- Costs: \$32.00 (buffet 27.00 / gift \$5.00)
- Suspense: Friday June 5, 2009
- POCs:

--- **SSG Theresa Gualdarama**, 672-1681, theresa.gauldarama@us.army.mil

--- **MAJ Barbara Tucker**, 672-1759, barbara.tucker@us.army.mil

- Save the Date – PACAF Air Force Birthday Ball. The 2009 PACAF Birthday Ball will be held on Saturday, September 18, 2009 at the Sheraton Waikiki Resort. Tickets go on sale early August. Contact **Maj Kimberly Grover** if you have any questions at 449-7927 or via email kimberly.grover@hickam.af.mil

- Save the Date - Hickam AFB Open House! The 2009 Hickam AFB Open House will be held September 18-19, 2009. The USAF Thunderbirds and the USA Golden Knights will be performing at this year's event!