
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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RETIREE PERSONNEL
RETIREE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM
NEWS

LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE BASE

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We are happy to introduce Colonel Joseph M. Codispoti, the new Commander of the 61st Air Base Group. Colonel Codispoti assumed command on 21 July. Formerly he was stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany as the Deputy Commander, 52d Mission Support Group. A 1980 graduate of James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, he received his commission in 1981 through Officer Training School. He has commanded at the squadron level and has served on the staff of Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force. Colonel Codispoti is married to the former Janice Hess of Annandale, VA. They have two daughters: Amber and Laura Beth.

NEWSLETTER

Due to difficulty in transferring funds, the past two newsletters were late. A special thanks for all the hard

work on the part of members of our staff, the Finance Department, and the Base Commander in resolving this problem. Our apologies for the delay and for any inconvenience any of you may have experienced.

DRIVING CLASS

The **2004 AARP** sponsored Driving Safety Program sessions have been discontinued due to the limited parking on base. For classes in your area call toll free **888 227-7669** and follow the prompts or visit their website at www.aarp.org/drive.

“Still serving” is our motto.



COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

The annual CFC fundraising is conducted during the months of October and November. Each of us has a chance to make a direct impact on our neighbors by promoting and supporting organizations we care about

most. The annual fundraising campaign helps to support more than 1,500 charitable agencies in the area. If you would like information on how you can help to make this year's campaign the best ever, contact the RAO after 1 October at **310 363-0183** for the name and phone number of this year's campaign chairperson.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The Base Exchange (BX) entrance is located on the north side of the BX building alongside the pedestrian walkway. The concession stands remain on the north side of the building. BX patrons should park in the parking lot along Aviation Blvd. If you have any questions concerning these issues, please call either the BX at their new telephone number **310 725-9912** or Capt Escalante/Lt Kindt at **310 363-3417**. (POC Capt Escalante **310 363-3417**)

LAAFB GATE AND TRAFFIC PLAN

LAAFB has developed an 11-month gate and traffic plan. This plan will be implemented starting 7 Sep 04 and ending 1 Aug 05. The purpose is to provide the base population a clear idea of the location of Area B redevelopment projects and their effect on traffic patterns and gate openings and closures. The plan consists of 4 phases. The base population will be notified two weeks in advance of a gate/traffic change through the following channels: ASTRO News, Staff bulleting headers, BX/Commissary postings and LAAFB public and intranet webpage alerts at http://www.losangeles.af.mil/Special_Interest/SAMS/laafbgateinformation.htm. Phase 1 of the plan starts on 7 Sep 04 and ends on 14 Nov 04. During this period, the BX pedestrian gate will be closed as well as gate 4. The entrance to the Aerospace parking lot (east of the BX) coming from Aviation Blvd will be closed. Gate 8 (El Segundo Blvd) and gate 5 (Douglas St), and the turnstile will be open. POVs with decal can enter through gate 8 or gate 5. POVs requiring a pass need to come in through gate 5 and stop at the visitor's center. Pedestrians with Government ID can come in to the base through gate 8 or gate 5. Pedestrians needing a pass need to come in through gate 5 and stop at the visitor's center. Pedestrians coming from Area A that have a secure area badge can come in through the turnstile on the southeast corner of the BX. POVs with decal wanting to park in the Aerospace parking lot will enter through gate 8 or gate 5 and drive on the road in front (north) of the BX. The Medical Clinic and Commissary parking lots will be available to patients and patrons only, respectively. All Area B personnel without a parking pass should park in the Aerospace parking lot and walk to their workplace. All commercial traffic will be inspected at gate 3 (Area A) and then escorted in through gate 5 or gate 8.

Gate 8 hours – El Segundo Blvd: **Monday-Friday, 0600-1800. Closed weekends and holidays.**
Gate 5 - Douglas Street 24 hours/7 days a week.

For any questions or comments you can contact us via e-mail at 61abg.ro.redev@losangeles.af.mil

PHARMACY PRESCRIPTION REFILL INFORMATION

To improve service and minimize waiting time for new prescriptions, it is mandatory to call in refills. Prescriptions with valid refills can be called in 10 days prior to running out of medication. Refills called in for El Segundo will be ready the next duty day after 1400 hours. Refills called in for Fort MacArthur will be ready after two duty days and after 1400 hours. For example, for Fort MacArthur refill, if you call a refill on Friday, that refill would be ready the following Tuesday. Keep in mind that holidays or down days are not counted as duty days. Refills called in are available for pick-up for a period of five duty days. To call in your refills using the 24-hour automated system, please call **310 363-1307**. (Mrs. Manning/SGSB/ **310 363-0261**)

THRIFT SHOP GRAND REOPENING

The Thrift Shop operated by the LAAFB Officers' Spouses' Club GRAND REOPENING was 9 September. The hours of operation are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the first Saturday of each month. Consignments are accepted on Thursdays during normal operating hours and the first Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Items may be left in the donation bin behind the shop. Proceeds from the Thrift Shop go to the club's welfare fund, which supports scholarships, base activities, and community projects. The Thrift Shop is located in Area B, Bldg. 220, in the parking lot across from the People Center. For more information, contact Joselyn Kirstein, Thrift Shop Manager at **310 732-2291**.

MANDATORY TRAINING FOR 61ST MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRON

The 61st Mission Support Squadron Military Personnel Flight (including Customer Service and the Orderly Room) is closed the first Thursday of every month for mandatory training. Education and Training, Family Support, and Personnel will remain open. (Bobbie Stottlemire, CCA, **310 363-1230/2626**)



LAW AUTHORIZES SMALL ANNUITY FOR CERTAIN MILITARY SURVIVING SPOUSES

A small monthly annuity may be payable to qualified surviving spouses of members of the Uniformed Services who (1) retired from active duty prior to September 21, 1972 and died prior to March 21, 1974; or (2) retired from the Reserve component of the Armed

Forces, who had received their 20-year letter, and who died before October 1, 1978. To be eligible, the surviving spouse must have been legally married to the member on the date of the member's death and must never have remarried. If eligible, the amount of the annuity payable will be reduced by any amount payable to the surviving spouse under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP), Minimum Income Widow (MIW), and/or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

Payment of this annuity is not automatic. If you think you might be eligible, a properly completed DD Form 2769, Application for Annuity, Certain Military Surviving Spouses, must be completed and submitted. Required documentation and forwarding address are listed on the reverse of the form. You can obtain a blank form from the RAO **310 363-0183** or contact Janice Jarzombek, at **1-800-531-7502** and she will mail you a blank application form.

SOME SURVIVORS FACE DEADLINE FOR RESTORED DIC BENEFIT

Last year President Bush signed Public Law 108-183, "the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003," which restores entitlement to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and related home loan and education benefits for surviving spouses who remarry on or after their 57th birthdays. Under the new law, surviving spouses who remarried after age 57 and before December 16, 2003, have **one year** to apply for restoration of DIC benefits. If VA receives the application later than December 16, 2004, restoration must be denied. The one-year application period does not apply to other surviving spouses whose remarriage on or after attaining age 57 followed enactment of the law. For more information on restoration of DIC, call VA's toll free number at **1-800-827-1000** or visit the nearest VA regional office. Office locations can be found in the blue pages of local telephone directories. People who are hearing impaired should call **1-800-829-4833**.

AF PHARMACIES IMPLEMENT NEW FORMULARY GUIDELINES

Air Force pharmacies will no longer distribute some high-use, but expensive medications. To assist in meeting the medical service fiscal parameters, changes will be made in dispensing non-sedating antihistamines, some arthritis medications and insulin. For patients requesting refills on the medications being deleted, a 30-day supply will be provided to allow them enough time to obtain a new prescription for another medication.

Currently, there are essentially three systems in place that influence the drug-selection process. First, DOD has a committee of physicians and pharmacists from all services that reviews classes of drugs and makes recommendations regarding individual medications that

must be carried at every military pharmacy. These medications, called basic core formulary drugs, provide the foundation for all other formulary decisions and represent the minimum number of drugs a pharmacy will carry.

Next, every medical facility has its own pharmacy and therapeutics committee, consisting of local physicians and pharmacists, who evaluate medications for addition to the formulary based upon the scope of practice at that particular facility.

The third is the Air Force medical operations function itself. This is a relatively new process where officials can direct changes across all Air Force pharmacies.

Patients seeking medications not contained on the pharmacy formulary can obtain up to a three-month supply of medication by mail by using the Tricare mail-order pharmacy or the retail managed care support contract pharmacies. Both require a co-payment of \$3 or \$9 depending on generic or brand-name medication.

Patients who have questions regarding their pharmacy benefit can contact their local pharmacy **310 363-0261**.

AAFES PRICING PRACTICE

Thanks to the "Best Price" pledge, shoppers around the world enjoy the lowest price at Army & Air Force Exchange facilities. AAFES' "Best Price" pledge works in two ways. If customers see a price differential of less than \$5 they can tell the cashier who will match it on the spot. Customers who report a price difference of greater than \$5 dollars need only to bring a current local competitor's ad to receive the reduced price. In either case the competitor's item, of course, must be identical to the item in the AAFES store.

AAFES also offers a 30-day price guarantee on any item originally purchased from AAFES and subsequently sold at a lower price by AAFES, or any local competitor.

There are exceptions to the "Best Price" program. Stores will not accept challenges from any website or catalog, including the All Services Exchange Mail Order Catalog. Other exclusions include "gimmick" promotions, special order automotive parts, gasoline, automotive labor/service, double and triple coupons, clearance items, flat percentage off items and vending items.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN TOLL-FREE SERVICE BEGAN JULY 1

A toll-free telephone service for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) allows participants and beneficiaries to receive account or transaction information via the service daily around the clock. They can speak to a participant service representative at one of two call centers from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday. For calls from the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico

and the Virgin Islands, the primary toll-free number is **877 968-3778** and the TDD number for the hearing impaired is **877 847-4385**. The number **504 255-8777** can be used for all other international calls.

EDELWEISS LODGE AND RESORT

Opening 15 September 2004 Edelweiss Lodge and Resort will provide a unique experience featuring world class recreation programs, diverse choices in dining and atmosphere and other adventures that only the Alps can offer. Service members, DOD civilians, retirees and their families can use the new online reservation system at www.afreceurope.com or call the Vacation Planning Center at **49-8821-729127** or DSN **440-2850**.

STATESIDE SPACE-A TRAVEL TEST EXTENDED

The one-year test to expand space-available travel privileges to family members of active duty and retired service members traveling within the continental US has been extended until further notice. Under this test phase, family members are able to accompany their sponsor aboard military flights. The test does not apply to "gray-area retirees" – Guard and Reserve Airmen who are retired but not yet eligible for retired pay and benefits. Additional space-A travel and signup information is available through the passenger policy branch Web site at

<http://public.amc.af.mil/SPACEA/spacea.htm>.

VA AUTOMATES DISABLED INSURANCE APPLICATION

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has expanded its online benefits applications to include Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance. This is a program of life insurance that provides \$10,000 of coverage to veterans who have received a service-connected disability rating for a new condition from VA within the past two years; were separated from service on or after April 25, 1951, under other than dishonorable conditions; and are in good health except for their service-connected conditions.

The application can be accessed through the online applications link at VA's main Web page at www.va.gov or through the insurance Web pages at www.insurance.va.gov. To initiate the process through a secure Web site protecting users' privacy, eligible veterans should click on "Apply for S-DVI Insurance Online Using Our Autoform Application."

The online application process guides applicants through each step of the application with easy-to-use help screens and tools. The first steps of the process will allow veterans to immediately determine if they are eligible for the insurance. They will also be able to learn about the different types of insurance plans and premiums available to them.

Once transmitted, applications are immediately processed. However, veterans who are uncomfortable submitting their application online may also print their application from the Web site and mail or fax it, just as they may do now with the paper version of the application.



PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE

The PMC is an engraved paper certificate signed by the current president that recognizes the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Eligible recipients include veterans and veterans' next of kin. More than one certificate may be provided to the recipient. Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply in person at any VA regional office, by fax or by U. S. mail. Requests can't be sent via e-mail, and there is not a specific form for requesting a PMC. Please enclose a copy of the veteran's discharge papers and death certificate with a request and submit copies only, as the VA will not return original documents.

If you have any questions about a certificate you have received or about the program, please e-mail the VA at pmc@mail.va.gov <<mailto:pmc@mail.va.gov>> or call **202 565-4964**. If you would like to request a PMC, fax your request, a copy of the discharge papers, and a death certificate to **202 565-8054**, or mail these documents to: Presidential Memorial Certificates, Veterans Affairs (41A1C), 810 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20420.

NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Every woman is at risk of developing breast cancer. The only protection a woman has is early detection. This is accomplished by doing monthly breast self-examinations (BSE), clinical breast examination (CBE) by the provider and routine mammograms. For more information call Ms. Ira Loper at **310 363-5278**. (Ira Loper, R.N., Breast Care Facilitator)

MILITARY ORDER OF PURPLE HEART

Any recipient of the Purple Heart interested in filing claims for VA benefits or in becoming a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart may contact Dan Trifunovich, National Service Officer, at West LA VA Medical Center. Phone **310 268-3721**.

HAWAII HICKAM RAO REOPENS

After going unmanned for several years, the Hickam AFB Retiree Activities Office is once more open for the

business of assisting members of the military retired community in the area.

Retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Smith recently volunteered his services as RAO director and will operate the office on a reduced schedule until he can find additional volunteers to assist.

The RAO, located at 25 E Street, Suite C-107, Bldg. 1102, is currently open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday. Retired members and their spouses are encouraged to drop by to show their support and volunteer a few hours a week, if possible. The phone number during operating hours is **808 449-0674**. (Release No 04-20-04)

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Health and Wellness Center offers various classes affecting your health and fitness. Classes are offered monthly and are open to all active duty, family members, retirees and DoD civilians. Learn how diet and lifestyle principles affect you. Advance registration is necessary for most classes. Visit or call the HAWC at **310 363-6266** to sign up or for information on classes and dates. The HAWC is located inside the new Fitness Center, behind Bldg 219. (Kim Cahill, **310 363-6266**.)

COMMUNITY CENTER'S COMPUTER ROOM

Between 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday thru Thursday, I.D. cardholders can access the internet, send e-mail messages, and use Microsoft programs in the computer room located inside the Community Center at Ft MacArthur. Six computers and a printer are available for use along with parental site control and unauthorized monitoring. Bring floppy disks to save data. For more information, contact Stella or Melvin at **310 363-8225**.

HARBOR VIEW LOUNGE'S NEW "GRILL IT YOURSELF" BBQ MEAL

Each Friday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the patio of the picturesque Harbor View Lounge located in the Community Center at Ft MacArthur, diners are able to grill and barbecue their own entrée. Add these personally prepared ribs, steak, or chicken entrees to the salad, potatoes, rolls and butter that are supplied for a fabulous meal at a reasonable price. The lounge opens for social hours from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and entertainment is featured from 8:00 p.m. to midnight. Call **310 363-2231** for additional information.

RETIRED MILITARY ALMANAC

The Retired Military Almanac is designed to keep retirees current on many subjects such as recently passed legislation, changes in qualifications for various programs, military health care, veterans' benefits, space available lodging and travel and many other topics

affecting retirees and their families. You can order the 2004 issue from the publishers for \$12 (includes postage) by sending a check or money order to Uniformed Services Almanac, Inc, PO Box 4144-AE, Falls Church VA 22044, or order by credit card by calling toll-free **888 872-9698**, or online at www.militaryalmanac.com (Army Echoes Issue 2, Vol XLVIII)

AAFES DISTRIBUTE GIFTS TO GIs

Since the Army and Air Force Exchange Service began its "Gifts from the Home Front" program last year, people from all walks of life have rallied around America's troops by contributing \$406,745 toward the program designed to lift the morale of deployed troops around the world.

Those wishing to send a "Gift from the Home Front" can simply log on to Web Site at www.aafes.com or call **877-770-4438** toll-free to buy gift certificates in \$10 or \$20 denominations. From there, the "Gift from the Home Front" may be sent to an individual service member designated by the purchaser or distributed to "any service member" through the USO, American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society or Fisher House.

"Gifts from the Home Front" gift certificates can be redeemed at AAFES facilities worldwide, including its 56 stores throughout central and southwest Asia. (Courtesy of Army and Air Force Exchange Service.)

AMVETS PETE VALDEZ POST 2 CULVER CITY

If you are interested in the camaraderie of fellow veterans, or helping out with veterans' rights issues, or just like cooking or baking for the occasional gathering with other members, then WE need you! Come join us at the AMVETS (American Veterans), Pete Valdez Post # 2 of Culver City. We are a dynamic group dedicated to serving our local veterans. We are now geared up for Monday night football on our big screen TV, for your viewing and socializing pleasure with fellow vets at the hall. We also do many other veterans' activities, like, sponsoring bingo at the West LA VA every 3rd Thursday of the month. This is a very rewarding endeavor and greatly appreciated by homeless and hospitalized veterans. We also meet every 3rd Saturday of the month, for our general meeting, at 12:30 PM; the hall is located about a half mile east of the 405 at 10858 Culver Blvd., in Culver City. For more info call (310) 837-5411 or email: delmon99@prodigy.net

SOME SENIOR MOMENTS

Three old pilots are walking on the ramp. First one says, "Windy, isn't it? Second one says, "No, it's Thursday!" Third one says, "So am I. Let's go get a beer." (Orange County Branch 175 **The Messenger**, Aug 2004)

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EDITORIAL POLICY

All Retirees are encouraged to send articles for the Newsletter. The contents may **NOT** be critical of DoD national policy or veteran's organizations. The Editor reserves the right to reduce the length of the material to fit space available.

DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER ISSUE:
1 NOVEMBER 2004



U.S. AIR FORCE