



Wyoming National Guard Retiree News

Volume VI, Number 5

July 2009

HONOR FLIGHT - WYOMING

Honor Flight - Wyoming has been formed to send WWII veterans to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C., at no cost to the veterans.

The first trip went 19-20 May and was very successful! The flight honored 110 Wyoming veterans, with 52 guardians and staff in support. Plans are being made to make another trip on 22-23 September.

Volunteers are needed to serve as guardians to assist the veterans during all aspects of the trip. One guardian will care for as many as three veterans.

Guardians make an \$800 donation to cover most costs. Guardians cannot be older than 70 or younger than 18 years of age, exceptions granted.

Call (307) 772-5145, leave your name and address and the proper application will be sent to you, i.e. veteran or guardian. The goal is to have two trips a year until all WWII vets are covered and then possibly the program will host Korean and Vietnam Veterans.

RETIREE CONFERENCE

The 6th Retiree Conference will be held in conjunction with Governor's Reception Oct. 3, in Cheyenne.

The conference is annually financially sponsored by WyMD and hosted by the WyNG Retiree Council.

Morning session will start at 7 a.m., with a continental breakfast

and scheduled briefings to follow on topics of concern to military retirees and family members. Sit down lunch will be served at 12:10 p.m., followed by a county fair type booth display.

Invitations will be sent in early August with RSVP for attendance.

WyANG COMPLETES DEPLOYMENT

The WyANG completed its Air Expeditionary Force mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in April 2009. Personnel, equipment and C-130 aircraft were relieved from deployment to Afghanistan.

The mission called for personnel deployed from 187th Airlift Sq, 153rd Maint Sq, 153rd Civil Eng Sq and the 153rd Security Forces.

WyARNG ETT RETURNS

Fifteen WyARNG Soldiers who made up the Embedded Training Team to Afghanistan returned to Wyoming May 14. They were deployed in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom, in May 2008.

Their mission was to serve as trainers and mentors for senior Afghan army officials of the Afghanistan National Army. The Soldiers came from Cheyenne, Laramie, Lingle, Gillette, and Evanston as well as from the states of Colorado, Utah and Nebraska.

The team left Wyoming with 16 troops but one was a casualty. Capt. Bruce Hayes was killed Sept. 17, 2008, as a result of a roadside

bombing. This was the 3rd ETT from Wyoming. The first team was deployed in 2005, the second in April 2007.

FIRE FIGHTERS RETURN

The WyANG had seven fire fighters from the 153rd Civil Engr Sq deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom beginning in February 2009. The Airmen were stationed in Baghdad for approximately four months.

WyANG AMPUTEE

How many WyNG retirees know that the WyANG has an amputee flying C-130s who is from Pine Bluffs? Maj. Alan Brown just completed his third tour to Afghanistan.

Over 10 years ago he shot himself in the leg during a hunting accident and his right leg had to be amputated. Prior to the accident, he had flown with the military for five years. It took seven years and hard work to again become a fully qualified C-130 pilot.

He uses his experience to educate and motivate other amputees.

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MUSEUM DONATIONS

In addition to maintaining the WyNG Museum, the Wyoming Militia Historical Society is planning to place displays in every armory as well as the new Joint Forces Reserve Center in Cheyenne. They are in desperate need of donations, both Army and Air.

Particularly there is a real shortage of rank and branch insignias, unit crests and unit patches. They have no 349th & 350th AFA Bn patches, crests, and branch insignias. Both units existed from 1953 to 1959 when they were consolidated into 3rd How Bn, 49th Arty.

Instead of letting those things gather dust around the house, why not donate them to the WyNG Museum?

MUSEUM NEWS

Your Wyoming National Guard Museum is "blooming" with items that are new to us. We are adding Wyoming pictures, plaques and posters to replace the old WWII poster hangings. One is a 1911 award that needs repair. The repair work will be done by a WyARNG retiree.

The Heritage Flag display, purchased by the WyARNG recruiters many years ago, has been requested by several organizations. The 10-flag presentation is highly praised and appreciated.

The State Library has offered a staff person to help us arrange and display our books. The library will also feature our museum in its' next publication called "Wyoming Library Roundup."

The Girl Guard and the WyNGA Board of Governors meet at the museum. We will have open houses again in July during Frontier Days on July 22 and July 24. We will be open from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. During the summer we are open every Wednesday 9-3.

Rolf Skoetsch has prepared a story board display of the WyNG Pole Mountain Training Site used from 1906 and 1937.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The Wyoming National Guard Retiree newsletter has attained another milestone with this issue: It has reached a decade plus one year of publishing three times a year, i.e. March, July and November.

It has been very gratifying with nothing but positive comments being received. Only negative word every now and then has been some would like to see it published every month.

These editors are swamped with just the three times a year along with all the other volunteer commitments we are involved in. If there is somebody out there who would like to volunteer and publish every month, be our guest!

We are still begging all readers to keep us posted on up to date address changes, both mailing and email.

It is very frustrating and costly when we have erroneous informa-

tion. Send your corrections to Bob Holmes, 1508 Hot Springs Ave, Cheyenne, 82001 or call (307) 632-7566 or cell 630-1676.

We now have 185 who have volunteered to obtain the newsletter through email and save WyMD postage. You do need a fast internet server or the PDF adobe file will not download.

Send your email address to RHolmes632@aol.com. If you are able and interested in joining this elite group. We send out an email message as soon as the next newsletter is published with the issue attached as a PDF.

We also send out email messages from time to time when there is information of immediate nature.

If you are not on our email list and wish to be, send your email address to RHolmes632@aol.com.

Wyoming Military Department Retiree & Veteran News
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INFORMATION SOURCES: Sources for information being published in this newsletter are gathered from federal, state and private organization publications. Consult with the editorial staff for exact source of data.

DISCLAIMER: Articles provided in this newsletter are of a generic nature and for information purposes only. Readers are urged to investigate an item before acting on it. Military retirees and veterans may have different rights & entitlements dependant on the program being described. Ensure you verify your eligibility with proper authorities before acting on any program described. This joint publication is written, published & distributed by personnel of the Wyoming Military Department using state & federal funds and complies with the DoD Joint Ethics Regulation as reviewed by the Wyoming Military Department Ethics Advisor.

OBITUARIES

We dedicate this portion to honor those who have passed on.

LOIS B. CLARK, 78, died May 21, in Tucson, Ariz. She was born in Robertson, Wyo., May 2, 1931. In the months preceding her death, she had some very serious health problems. Lois was the surviving spouse of the late and well known WyARNG Col. Terrance D. "Terry" Clark. Terry retired from both civil service and military in 1984 and passed away in January 2002. Lois remained a great supporter of the WyNG after Terry's death.

BRUCE C. COLEMAN, 80, passed away April 24, in Casper. He was born Feb. 21, 1929, in Auburn, Neb., but was raised in Wheatland. Bruce originally joined the 141st Tank Bn, WyARNG in 1947 and was mobilized with the unit for the Korean War. He left WyARNG in 1957 to join the WyANG serving there until his retirement as MSgt in 1976.

JOHN B. GRAHAM, 48, died at Davis Hospice Center, in Cheyenne, on March 28, after suffering a long time with cancer. John was born Aug. 12, 1960, in Bartlesville, Okla. He had served 4 years active duty with the USAF (Feb 84-Feb 88) prior to joining the WyANG in February 1988. He then served continuously until his illness forced him to retire as MSgt July 30, 2007. John also was a WyANG full time electronics technician prior to his retirement.

RAYMOND C. (RAY) JONES, 75, died June 25, in Casper, after a long battle with cancer. He was born April 6, 1934. Ray served in the Korean War and joined the WyARNG after the war as a full time auto mechanic at the Casper Orgn Maint Shop (OMS). He served in that capacity until his retirement from both at age 60 in 1994.

MARY L. KNOX, 82, died at Davis Hospice Center, in Cheyenne, Dec. 29, 2008. She was born Sept. 17, 1926, in Hugo, Colo., but had lived in Cheyenne for the past 55 years. She was the surviving spouse of the late SMSgt Clar-

ence "Bill" L. Knox who served in the WyANG from 1949 until his retirement in June 1984.

RICHARD L. (LES OR MAC) McFARLAND, 86, died April 27, at home in Casper, from a heart attack. He was born Dec. 6, 1922, in Casper. Les served in the US Army Air Corps during WWII, enlisting on Dec. 11, 1941. He then joined the WyARNG in 1948 and subsequently served both full time and militarily for the next 28 years. Mac was appointed 2LT in 1953 and was the full time administrative assistant for the Casper Artillery Bn. His final assignment was as the Commandant for WyOCS. He retired as LTC in January 1976 but continued to voluntarily support the WyNG in his retired status until his death.

WILLIAM C. NUNAMAKER, 76, passed away at the Niobrara Health and Life Center, in Lusk, Wyo., May 20, after a 14 year battle with cancer. Bill was born July 4, 1932, in Minerva, Ohio, and served in the US Navy & USNR from 1952 until 1964. He joined the WyARNG Evanston unit in September 1978 and served continuously until he was transferred to the Retired Reserve as a SSG in July 1992.

KEITH SPENCER, 45 was killed in a mountain climbing accident near Cody, Wyo., on Jan. 2. He was born March 14, 1963, in Reno, Nev. Keith joined the WyARNG in Laramie Sept. 23, 1988 and served there until June 1995 when he joined the CoARNG. He re-joined WyARNG June 1998 and then transferred from WyARNG to the WyANG as a SSG in March 2004 and remained active with the ANG until his death.

FREDERICK W. (BILL) TRUMBULL, 80, died April 18, in Laramie and was born April 21, 1928, in Laramie. Bill served in the US Army and USAR from 1951 to 1958. He joined 133d Engr Co as SP4 in October 1971 and subsequently went to work for the unit full time. He was retained until age 62 to qualify for military retirement and retired from both civil service and military as a SSG on April 20, 1990.

NANCY A. WINTER, 29, was fatally

injured in a motorcycle accident Aug. 24, 2008, in Minnesota. She was born Oct. 13, 1978, in Minn. Nancy joined the WyANG as a TSgt June 2, 2007 after having prior service in USAF. She was still active WyANG at the time of her death.

JERRY E. WITHERS, 72, died June 25, from a massive heart attack He was born March 1, 1937, in Stella Neb. Jerry served 10 years in the USAF (1955-65), 1 year with NeANG (65-66) and then joined the WyANG as a SSgt and as a full timer in July 1966. He retired as a CMSgt Aircraft Maintenance Chief at age 60 in 1997.

WyNG RETIRED CAPS

Wyoming (Army or Air) Guard Retired Caps are available for purchase from the Wyoming Militia Historical Society (WMHS). Cost is \$12 and \$3 for shipping. Caps are of the latest design in dark brown with lettering and traditional bucking horse with rider in gold. Be sure to specify if you want Army or Air. Make your \$15 check payable to WMHS and send to Bob Holmes, 1508 Hot Springs Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001-5361.

Caps will be sent upon receipt of your money or you can pick one up for \$12 at the WyNG Museum, 624 E. Pershing, Cheyenne, or by either calling the museum (307) 638-9481 or Bob Holmes (307) 632-7566 or (cell) (307) 630-1676.

WyNG LICENSE PLATES

WyNG members and retirees can have more than one set of WyNG license plates at no additional cost to the normal rate. Surviving spouses can now retain and purchase the plates also. Exchange your present issued plates at no additional cost. Pick up a standard special plate form at the local county treasurer's office, complete it and return to the treasurer's office. Allow 30 days for processing. Show military ID for proof of eligibility. Questions contact Debbie Franck, debra.franck@us.army.mil, (866) 992-7641 ext. 5167.

RETIREE COUNCIL INFO

The WyNG Retiree Council convened its spring meeting on May 31, in Cheyenne at the WyNG museum. The council is appointed by the State's Adjutant General and its main mission is to create a link between WyMD and the WyNG retiree community. Listed below are the present council members and their point of contact (all are in area code 307 unless otherwise indicated). Utilize them to voice your concerns.

Co-Chair:

Bob Holmes, (c) 630-1676 and
Nick Kricken (c) 631-2947

Air Guard reps:

Rich Ames (c) 630-1413

Dick Simmons (c) (303) 829-0810

Chuck Breedlove (c) 630-4394

Mary Barrett (h) 514-3956

Army Guard reps:

Kem Price (c) 751-2172

Harold Ramirez (c) 534-5121

Ken Perssons (c) 349-2881

Sue Reed (h) 673-5354

Surviving Spouse:

Liz Escobedo (h) 632-2490

Ex-Officio:

Larry Barttelbort (c) 631-0812

Recorder:

Ron LoPorto (c) 630-7266

Following issues were discussed at the meeting:

1 – Budget request from state funds for 2010-1012 was drafted.

2 – Plans were formed for the 6th annual retiree conference to be held in conjunction with the Governor's Reception in Cheyenne Oct. 3. Full mailing again this year, using email where possible. Mail invitations first week in Aug.

3 – Council voted to support and promote attendance to the WyNGA Appreciation affair being held at the Holiday Inn on Aug. 22, in Cheyenne.

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4 – Council voted to support the Yellow Ribbon Program.

5 – Council voted to support the WWII Veteran Honor Flights. Only negative from last flight was security check. Council members will try to get WyANG to do security checks.

6 – Kem Price will pursue obtaining sample retiree shirts so retirees can order and pay when attending the Oct. 3 conference.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

In view of the mass deployments and other commitments early part of this year, WyNGA conducted a business meeting only for its annual conference on April 25, 0800-1200. It was held at WAFB Pronghorn Center in Cheyenne with about 50 in attendance. All of the required business was accomplished.

The WyMD, with the help of some of the WyNGA's members, sponsored a very successful annual Adjutants General Association of the United States conference in Jackson, June 1-5.

To make up for its shortened annual conference, WyNGA will conduct a fun day capped off with an Appreciation Dinner on Aug. 22, at the Holiday Inn in Cheyenne. Events scheduled are: a golf tournament in the afternoon, Spouse Auxiliary meeting at 1400 in the WyNG museum with Rita Meyer as guest speaker, cocktails starting at 5 p.m., with Auxiliary silent auction, dinner at 6 p.m., with Tom Burman, Athletic Director for UW as guest speaker, and a professional comedian. Cost will be \$35 single & \$65 per couple if paid before Aug. 14; after that \$40 per person. It is hoped as many retirees as possible will attend. Registration can be done online with a credit
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card using <http://www.wynga.org> or mail to WyNGA, PO Box 2615, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

EANGUS 38th annual conference Aug. 9-12 in Rochester, Minn.

NGAUS 131st annual conference Sept. 11-13, in Nashville.

Retirees are still urgently needed for life time membership:

Officer: \$125 = NGAUS + \$25 = WyNGA, Total = \$150.

Enlisted age 50 & older: \$100 = EANGUS + \$25 = WyNGA, total = \$125

Auxiliary = \$15 a year.

For more information on life time membership, officers call (307) 772-5968 and enlisted call (307) 772-6290.

YOUTH CHALLENGE

The 2009 Wyoming Legislature passed and the governor signed a bill that will allow additional state funds to be expended enough to cover whatever federal funds allocated are short of in keeping the Youth Challenge Program going.

The next class begins July 18. For more information on Youth Challenge, call (307) 836-7500.

ADOPT A SINGLE SOLDIER

More than 700 WyARNG Soldiers are now stationed in Iraq and Kuwait, and about 150 are single.

The Yellow Ribbon Program is asking for volunteers to adopt a single Soldier and at their own expense regularly communicate through letters, cards, notes, emails, care packages and anything else to support the single Soldier.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact WyMD toll free (866) 992-7641, ext. 5457.

BDE DEPLOYMENT INFO

About 700 WyARNG troops were deployed for the Middle East the end of April 2009. About 240 ARNG soldiers from other states volunteered to bring the total of the 115th Fires Bde up to the required 940 personnel. A large share of these troops are from Hawaii.

The reduction in Wyoming Soldiers assured enough troops remained in state to handle forest fires or other natural disasters. Also the reduction prevented some WyARNG from serving outside the normal rotation, a practice that hurts morale and recruitment.

Initially the Soldiers traveled to Fort Hood, Texas, where they were joined by troops from Alabama, Colorado, Minnesota and South Dakota. The 115th Fires Bde will have command of over 2,400 ARNG troops. Units departed Fort Hood for Kuwait in late June. The primary mission of the command is twofold, protect troops moving in and out of Iraq and be in charge of US military transition camps in Kuwait. Units are scheduled to return to the states in April 2010.

ANG ROTATIONS CONTINUE

The WyANG continues its 120 day rotations of 30 troops and equipment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom by providing airlift support. Those deployed in February returned to Cheyenne on June 19. Their replacements departed Cheyenne a few days before.

YCP GRADUATES 29

Twenty-nine cadets of the WyNG Youth Challenge Program, located at Camp Guernsey, graduated on June 21 after completing 5½ months of residence training. Training included academics, citizenship, life-coping skills, civic
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services, leadership and physical fitness.

Applications are being accepted for the next class.

For more information about the program, cadet applications or how to become a mentor, call (307) 836-7503 or visit www.ngycp.org/state/wy.

MAFFS C-130 FACTS

There are 4 USAF units in the US who have the mission to fight forest fires. They are:

153rd Airlift Wing, WyANG
146th Airlift Wing, CaANG
145th Airlift Wing, NCANG
302nd Airlift Wing, USAFR,
Peterson AFB, CO.

Here are some interesting facts about the mission for these units:

*C-130 Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) units hold 3,000 gallons of fire retardant chemical (30,000 pounds).

*Planes fly 150 feet above the blaze at 110-120 knots (127-138 mph).

*Coverage area is 150 feet wide by 1,500 feet long.

*MAFFS was first used in early 1970s by DoD.

*Since the '70s ANG & USAFR have flown more than 6,500 MAFFS sorties in North America, Europe and Asia.

*Each aircraft makes 60-70 practice sorties a day during annual training periods.

RODEO PRO JOINS WyARNG

Capt. Jeremy Sparks, WyARNG is the newly appointed OIC of the WyNG Yellow Ribbon Program, which is designed to support deployed personnel and their families.

Sparks is more known for his seven times as Cheyenne Frontier Days and five times as Casper College National Finals Rodeo Bull-Retiree News -- *Wyo. Military Dept.*

fighter. That is the guy who saves the bullrider from the bull when the ride is over.

After 9/11, already a professional bullfighter, Sparks joined the USAF and went on temporary duty to rodeos to fight bulls and recruit for the Air Force. He just recently separated from USAF as a captain, where he was assigned at Warren AFB in Cheyenne as an ICBM combat crew member.

The WyARNG recruiters convinced him to join and become the only professional bullfighter in the ARNG and represent WyARNG.

POLE MOUNTAIN

During June through October this year the US Army Corps of Engineers will be conducting a search and removal of explosives and munitions from the old firing ranges located on Pole Mountain of the Medicine Bow Range and North of Vedauwoo.

Weapons training that included mortars, light artillery and small arms firing were conducted at Pole Mountain between 1879 and 1961 by the US Army. The Wyoming National Guard conducted their annual field encampments there and were a part of that training from 1906 until 1937 at which time they moved their training site to Camp Guernsey.

NEW ARNG DIRECTOR

MG Joseph Taluto, TAG of NY, has been selected to be the new NGB ARNG Director. He will replace LTG Vaughn who retired after 40 years of service as soon as he is confirmed by the Senate. In the mean time, MG Carpenter of the SDARNG was named Acting Director. Since 2006 he has served as the special assistant to NGB ARNG Director.

RSOs

Permanent Retirement Service Offices, or RSOs, are located in Cheyenne to serve retirees, family members and surviving spouses with their administrative needs.

Recently widowed spouses are encouraged to contact the RSOs ASAP.

Personal visits should be prearranged by appointments: POCs are:

ARNG: Staff Sgt. Zachary "Chane" Welchman, toll-free (866) 992-7641, ext. 5238, local 772-5238, 5500 Bishop Blvd, Cheyenne, WY 82009; email:

Zachary.welchman@us.army.mil.

ANG: Master Sgt. Denise Hondel, toll-free (866) 992-7641, ext 6457, local 772-6457, 217 Dell Range Blvd, Cheyenne, WY 82009; email: denise.hondel@ang.af.mil.

In addition, the most up-to-date computer software systems, for issuing military ID cards and DEERS registration (active, gray area, retired and dependents), are permanently located as follows:

1. WyMD, 5500 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne.
2. Laramie Armory, 2901 Armory Rd.
3. Sheridan Armory, 3219 Coffeen Ave.
4. Casper Armory, 5905 CY Ave.
5. WyANG, 217 Dell Range Blvd, Cheyenne.

Please note: U.S. Air Force installations no longer require the display of a DoD vehicle ID decal; however, most other services do, particularly the U.S. Army. The WyANG will continue to issue decals at the WyANG base, 217 Dell Range Blvd., Cheyenne. Check at the WyANG front gate for the location of the issuing office.

SPACE-A TRAVEL

Space-A Travel allows military retirees (including gray area) to fly on military or military contracted flights
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in CONUS or worldwide on a space available status.

It also allows dependents to accompany military retirees who are age 60 or over. Retirees and eligible family members must present valid military ID cards, passports/visas and immunization records as required.

Travelers no longer have to revalidate every two weeks. They can sign up for the full 60 days. It is important to sign up as soon as you land, particularly overseas. Passengers are processed in priority order by sign in time.

Each traveler is authorized two pieces of baggage, 70 lbs. each and 62 linear inches in size. Space-A passengers can encounter long and frequent costly waiting periods or have to buy commercial transportation when space is not available.

The military is not obligated to provide transportation to Space-A travelers to or from desired destinations.

To check on scheduling and space available on WyANG aircraft call toll free (866) 992-7641, ext 6317, 6318, 6109 or 6260.

SSN OFF ID CARDS

The first phase of removing SSN from military ID cards has started with dependent IDs. Dependents will see the change when they renew their cards.

This change is being made to protect the identity information of the card holder. Sponsors' SSN will remain visible on the card.

Those renewing are reminded to bring two forms of ID and one must be a federal or state issued photo ID.

Retirees who have an indefinite expiration date on their ID card and wish to have their SSN removed will have to wait until Jan 2010 to do so.

Spouses who are either 75 years
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or order or permanently disabled can apply for a permanent ID, when the current card expires.

HAND SALUTES

There appears to be a misunderstanding about rendering a hand salute while in civilian clothes. It used to be a violation of federal law.

However, the law was changed in 2008, which specifically allows service members and veterans, not in uniform, to render a military hand salute during the hoisting, lowering or passing of the flag.

The law was further modified in 2009 which also allows the salute during the playing of the National Anthem. The changes did not include during the pledge of allegiance.

There the proper way is to place the right hand over the heart. The law does not specify the wearing of headgear is required when rendering the salute while in civilian clothes.

CONCURRENT RECEIPT

Five years ago Congress finally killed an old law that required retirees to forfeit a dollar of retired pay for every dollar received for disability.

However, they phased it in gradually over 10 years lasting thru 2014. Recently they added a second program to cover combat disabled vets.

Now the President wants to add another group. Those are the 103,000 granted disability retirement before 20 years service known as the Chapter 61 retirees.

Retired pay is earned over the course of a career. Disability pay is compensation for a loss that came as a result of that service. One should not offset the other.

Let your congressional delegation know if you agree.

COLA

So far, FY 2009 has had the lowest inflation rate in almost 40 years. At the end of March it was still at -3.8 percent. Unless it rises at least 4 percent before the end of September 2009, military retirees, surviving spouses and social security recipients will not see any COLA increase for 2010. In fact, if COLA does not increase and Medicare Part B cost increases some could see a reduction in their social security

INCOME TAXES

The recent stimulus package reduced income tax for working folks by \$400 for singles and \$800 for couples and was accomplished by smaller taxes being withheld from pay checks. The IRS applied the smaller withholding to all taxpayers. Non-working folks will have a big surprise come income tax filing time. Non-working retirees and surviving spouses, who also got the additional \$250 social security check, will find at the end of the year they still owe that 400/800 tax in full plus the \$250 counts also.

To eliminate a huge amount owed to IRS, a person can either increase taxes withheld by using DFAS electronic MyPay system or fill out a new W-4 and send to DFAS. DFAS mailing address appears on your annual LES.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

From time to time the question is asked, "Will I be penalized if I continue working and draw social security at the same time?" There is no penalty once you reach full SS retirement age. Remember, full retirement age is gradually being increased from age 65 for those
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born after 1937 until it reaches age 67 in 2027. If you receive SS benefits from age 62 until the year before full retirement year, they will withhold \$1 for every \$2 earned above a specified limit (\$14,160 in 2009). The year you reach full age, they will withhold \$1 for every \$3 above the limit (\$37,680 in 2009) until the month of full retirement age and then there is never any penalty.

NO TRICARE INCREASE

For the past 3 years, DoD and the White House have tried to reduce Tricare costs by increasing fees for working age military retirees. Finally the two decided to provide \$47.4 billion to fully fund the defense health program for the 2010 budget. Congress has always rejected any fee increase each time it has come up. Dropping fee hikes this year does not mean that the Pentagon has lost interest. They will continue to persuade Congress to allow increases in Tricare enrollment fees, deductibles and co-payments, which they claim, have not increased since the program was created in 1994. MOAA recently stated they would not object to increases if they are proportional to COLA increases to retired pay. The military coalition has long argued a more efficient health care system would cut cost, i.e. expand use of mail order pharmacy system, and have Tricare cover co-payments on private insurance plans so to encourage working military retirees to use their employer health plans.

TRS

Tricare Reserve Select (TRS) is a new program available for National Guard and Reservist not on active duty. It is basically the same program
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as Tricare Standard. Subscribers can go to an authorized provider of choice but pay less out of pocket costs if they use Tricare Network providers. Also they qualify for Tricare prescription drug coverage. Premiums are monthly; \$47.51 for single and 180.17 for families. There are two bills before Congress that will authorize this same coverage to gray area retirees until they reach age 60 and Tricare becomes effective. They are HR270 and S731.

TRICARE APPEALS

If Tricare denies all or part of a claim you immediately become responsible for the debt. Before you do anything, file an appeal. You have 90 days to file an appeal or otherwise resolve the issue. In the mean time you can try to resolve the problem with a phone call to your Regional Tricare Service Center or write Tricare Management Activity, 16401 East Centretech Parkway, Aurora, CO 80011-9043. By filing an appeal you are protecting your rights.

TRICARE PRIME

Tricare Prime enrollees who live more than 30 minutes drive from their Military Treatment Facility (MTF) will have to seek a waiver from the MTF designee and Tricare Regional Director. Waivers will be granted based on MTF capacity.

Unless a waiver is granted before Oct. 1, 2009, enrollees who live more than 30 minutes but less than 40 miles from MTF will be assigned a civilian provider closer to their residence.

Absent a waiver, those who live more than 40 miles from the MTF will be disenrolled from Prime and reverted to Tricare Standard as of Oct. 1, 2009.

TRICARE COVERAGE

The question often comes up as to when do Tricare, Tricare for Life (TFL) and Medicare benefits start when the Wyoming National Guard retiree and spouse are different ages? Both the retiree and spouse become eligible for Tricare (includes Standard, Extra and Prime) on the day the retiree reaches age 60 regardless if the spouse is younger or older. Only requirement is for both to obtain an appropriate military ID card which automatically registers them for DEERS, the driving force for Tricare. Requirements for TFL eligibility are: you must be age 65 and enrolled in Medicare Part B. So, the answer is: the younger spouses will continue under Tricare coverage until they reach age 65 and the older spouses will have to change to TFL/Medicare on the day they become age 65.

GOT SODA?

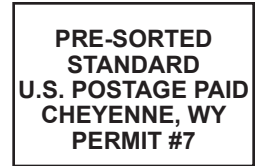
A study conducted by a Cleveland Clinic suggested soda drinkers may be more likely to develop risk factors associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes. The study analyzed 10 years worth of data and focused on middle aged Americans who drank one or more regular or diet sodas daily. Factors are known as metabolic syndrome which includes obesity, high levels of blood sugar and bad cholesterol. The findings of the report don't suggest soda directly causes metabolic syndrome. The report actually revealed more about soda drinkers, like they may have a less active lifestyle and may desire more sweets than a non-soda drinker.

Final analyzes suggested people to choose skim milk, tea or coffee, and of course water, rather than soda.

SWINE FLU FACTS

Flu can be caused by many different viruses. Some primarily infect people; others infect mostly pigs or just birds. Pigs routinely get swine flu and are susceptible to viruses affecting people and birds. The recent swine flu includes components of human, pig and bird viruses. Swine flu is not transmitted by eating pork. Transmission between pigs and people usually occurs on the farm. Swine flu in people includes runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Virus is spread between people by direct contact i.e. sneezing & coughing droplets that live for hours on surfaces. Swine flu can be treated with antiviral drugs and should be administered within a day or two of illness. Best prevention is washing your hands before touching eyes, nose, and mouth and particularly before eating.

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