

# Air Force Sergeants Association



Friday, April 7, 2006

Founded at Bolling AFB, DC, on May 3, 1961.



**Protecting and defending the quality-of-life benefits of the "TOTAL AIR FORCE" Enlisted Corps and their families since 1961**

This is AFSA's electronic news publication. A new issue will be available every Friday on AFSA's web site. To access the links referenced in the articles, simply click on them. If needed to read this publication, you may download a FREE copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader by clicking: [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

## NEW SENATE CHAMPIONS EMERGE THEY STAND UP FOR ENLISTED ON TAXES AND TRICARE

**VET TAX FAIRNESS:** As many veterans know, the initial VA disability compensation process can be a lengthy one, often taking a year or two to complete. But if the veteran disagrees with the VA's findings and appeals the initial decision, another year or two can be added waiting for action by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA). If that fails, the veteran can expect to add an equal timeframe for the claim to be heard by the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. If the court remands the claim back to the BVA for further development....anyway it is easy to see how the process can seem to take forever. In some instances, veterans have been fighting with the VA over a claim upwards of ten years--or more.

When military retirees are awarded retroactive disability compensation, some or all of their previously received taxable retiree pay is designated as nontaxable disability compensation. This could mean the IRS owes the disabled military retiree a refund for taxes paid on their retiree pay. However, the current IRS statute of limitations constrains affected disabled military retirees to claiming a refund for only the recent prior 3 years, even though the VA may take longer than that to reach a final disability ruling. Two months ago AFSA reported that Representatives Sam Farr, D-CA, and Michael Bilirakis, R-FL, joined together to introduce H.R. 4727, the Disabled Veterans Tax Fairness Act. This legislation would return withheld taxes to some disabled military retirees who have been penalized through no fault of their own.

Now, two senators have emerged to champion the issue on their side of the Hill as well. This week Senator Blanche Lincoln, D-AR, and Craig Thomas, R-WY, introduced S. 2503, The Disabled Veterans Tax Fairness Act of 2006. According to Senator Lincoln, "Our grateful nation should be doing everything we can to ensure that those who have sacrificed so greatly on our behalf are not unjustly

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Senator Blanche Lincoln,  
D-AR

*penalized financially because of a bureaucratic inefficiency that is beyond their control. This situation is unacceptable and our veterans deserve better.*" S. 2503 would allow veterans to file amended returns for the entire period of the pending claim thereby ensuring veterans are not penalized by a federal bureaucratic system fraught with problems and delays that are beyond the veteran's control. AFSA commends Senators Lincoln and Thomas for their efforts to reconcile this injustice. All members are encouraged to contact their representative and two senators and urge them to support this important legislation.

TRICARE FEES UPDATE: This week, twenty more representatives signed onto H.R. 4949 bringing the bills cosponsor total to 138. The new cosponsors are:

Rep Tom Udall, D-NM, 4/4/2006  
Rep Betty McCollum, D-MN, 4/4/2006  
Rep Patrick Kennedy, D-RI, 4/4/2006  
Rep James Langevin, D-RI, 4/4/2006  
Rep Mark Udall, D-CO, 4/4/2006  
Rep John Kuhl, Jr. R-NY, 4/4/2006  
Rep Rahm Emanuel, D-IL, 4/4/2006  
Rep Rosa DeLauro, D-CT, 4/4/2006  
Rep Russ Carnahan, D-MO, 4/5/2006  
Rep Michael Sodrel, R-IN, 4/5/2006

Rep Jose Serrano, D-NY, 4/4/2006  
Rep Michael McNulty, D-NY, 4/4/2006  
Rep Jim McDermott, D-WA, 4/4/2006  
Rep Janice Schakowsky, D-IL, 4/4/2006  
Rep Michael Doyle, D-PA, 4/4/2006  
Rep Shelly Capito, R-WV, 4/4/2006  
Rep Marcy Kaptur, D-OH, 4/4/2006  
Rep Jim Saxton, R-NJ, 4/5/2006  
Rep Jay Inslee, D-WA, 4/5/2006  
Rep Scott Garrett, R-NJ, 4/5/2006

\*\*If your representative is listed, please take the time to send him/her a thank you note.

The most important news on the TRICARE fees issue this week is that two key senators have teamed up to lead the Senate effort to preserve the military health care benefit. Senator Frank L. Lautenberg, D-NJ, and Chuck Hagel, R-NE, introduced legislation today that is similar to H.R. 4949. Both bills seek to establish the principal that it is Congress' responsibility, not the Pentagon's, to determine when and by how much military health care fees will be increased. By doing so, the legislation would remove DoDs current authority to make virtually unlimited increases. The number for the new Senate bill was not available at press time. As he introduced the formal bill before the Senate, Senator Lautenberg said, *"Especially in a time of war, it is unconscionable that the Administration would even consider dramatically increasing the fees for the career-military men and women who have sacrificed for our country. My bill assures today's military retirees and their families that, just as they protected us, we will take care of them when their service ends."* Upon learning of the two Senator's plans, AFSA Executive Director Richard Dean offered each the full support of the association towards the bills passage, saying, *"It is always proper that a nation be faithful to its service members. AFSA appreciates your strong leadership on this important legislation. I will send personal letters to every non-cosponsor of your bill to encourage them to step up to the plate and support this important legislative effort. I will also encourage our members to take the same action."* AFSA lobbyists will begin the push for this legislation on Monday; however, we will need a robust grassroots response to coincide with our efforts if we are to move this issue forward. Simply contact your two senators and ask them to support the Lautenberg/Hagel bill and be sure to watch for the new bill number and related information in next week's AFSA bulletin.

CONGRESS IN RECESS: Congress will be in recess for the next two weeks (April 10-24, 2006) and your elected representatives will be working from their local offices. During this timeframe congressional members attend various functions throughout their districts and states. Some hold town-hall meetings or other venues that afford citizens an opportunity to speak face-to-face with their congressional member(s) on important issues. We encourage everyone to take advantage of the upcoming recess to do just that because there are lots of very important issues on the table. Some are military related, others are not, but what is important is that your voice is heard.

# OTHER NEWS OF INTEREST TO ENLISTED PERSONNEL

**C-5 CRASH:** All 17 people aboard an Air Force C-5 Galaxy transport survived when one of these massive jets crashed at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, on Monday. Most of the survivors were members of the 436th Airlift Wing and the Air Force Reserve's 512th Airlift Wing, both of which are based out of Dover. Click here for the complete story including a list of the survivors and an update on their medical status. [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2006/20060404\\_4712.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2006/20060404_4712.html)

**DEPUTY CONFIRMED:** Yesterday the Senate confirmed Gordon England as Deputy Secretary of Defense. England's nomination for the Deputy Secretary position stalled in the Senate last year over concerns about his ties to various defense-related companies. In April 2005, the President nominated Secretary of the Navy Gordon England as Deputy Secretary of Defense. Mr. England served as Acting Deputy from May 16, 2005 to January 4, 2006, when he was recess appointed by the President as Deputy Secretary. Secretary England served as the 72nd Secretary of the Navy from May 24, 2001, until he joined the Department of Homeland Security in January 2003 as its first Deputy Secretary. He then went on to be confirmed as the 73rd Secretary of the Navy on September 26, 2003, becoming only the second person in history to serve twice as the leader of the Navy-Marine Corps Team and the first to serve in back-to-back terms.

**RESERVE PERSONNEL RECORDS:** According to a recent Air Reserve Personnel Center press release, Air Force Reserve members worldwide can now correct or change their duty history via the virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve, a customer-service Web portal operated by the Air Reserve Personnel Center. Previously, Airmen had to visit their local military personnel flight or call several agencies to correct their duty history. Now, no matter the time of day, reservists can log on to the vPC-GR at <http://arpc.afrc.af.mil/support/default.asp>. Airmen can click on the "Correct Duty History" link and annotate their changes, attach any relevant supporting documentation and click on "submit." There is no change to the process for updating current duty information; that still must be done through the local commander's support staff or base individual mobilization augmentee administrators. ARPC and the Air Force Personnel Center are working on centralizing and automating many of their processes for all Airmen and civilians in the total force. Processes that have been automated or centralized at ARPC include 20-year letter (re-issue), mortgage letter, current points request, promotion board counseling request, and electronic promotion letter to the board president. In the future, automated and centralized services should account for nearly all aspects of an Airman's personnel actions, from initial enlistment to retirement. Between now and Sept. 1, 2007, ARPC will work to automate or centralize retirements, separations, awards and decorations, evaluations, enlisted promotions, assignments, retraining, reenlistments, duty status, classifications, adverse actions and accessions.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR AIRMAN HELD (AFPN Article):** More than 300 people attended a memorial ceremony April 1 for the first Airman from Sather Air Base killed in combat while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Tech. Sgt. Walter Moss, 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal flight technician, was killed in an explosion while he was conducting safing operations near Baghdad March 29. Sergeant Moss had been deployed to Sather AB since January from the 366th CES, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. During his time in Iraq, EOD responded to more than 200 calls in the Baghdad vicinity without incident. Every successful call meant Sergeant Moss potentially saved a life. "In this war, you are a major point of the tip of the spear," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Jim Browning, 447th Air Expeditionary Group chaplain. "No

A soldier renders a final salute in honor of Technical Sergeant Walter Moss at a memorial service on Saturday, April 1, 2006, at Sather Air Base, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Will Ackerman)



doubt, many owe their lives because of your professional persistence.” A musician opened the memorial playing “Amazing Grace” on the bagpipes. Capt. Stephanie Root, Sergeant Moss’ officer in charge, read handwritten messages his fellow EOD technicians had written about him. One emphasized the challenge all EOD Airmen face. “People who have never taken that long and lonely walk down to safe an (improvised explosive device) or a roadside bomb will never come to fathom how it feels,” said Master Sgt. J.T. Thrower, 447th ECES EOD flight. “He was willing to take that long and lonely walk so others will continue to live.” After Captain Root finished reading, Senior Master Sgt. Dale Moser, EOD superintendent, conducted a “final roll call,” saying each of the EOD team members’ names. They responded, “Here, senior master sergeant.” When Sergeant Moser called for Sergeant Moss, there was silence. EOD detonated an explosive device in a field behind the audience as a final EOD salute, and a bugler played Taps.

DOOLITTLE RAID WEB EXCLUSIVE ON AIR FORCE LINK — SAN ANTONIO (AFPN) Just a few short months after a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, a daring raid launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet changed the tone of the war. It set the U.S. and its allies on a course that would eventually lead to domination of the Pacific during World War II. This year marks the 64th anniversary of the famed “Doolittle Raid,” when a group of 16 B-25 bombers comprised of 80 pilots and crew left their aircraft carrier on April 18, 1942, on a one-way, 500-mile trek to Tokyo to drop the first bombs on mainland Japan. Lt. Col. James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle commanded “Task Force 16,” in a daring assignment that in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s words, took “...the war to Japan.”

A special Web exclusive this month on Air Force Link, the official U.S. Air Force Web site, highlights those accomplishments and the men who made history. A special multi-media presentation presents a visual look at the historic mission and the 80 men who changed the course of the war, as well as snapshots from the aircraft carrier as the mission began. There is also a Doolittle documentary, an audio and video presentation in Colonel Doolittle’s own words about the mission and why its success was not only important to the task force involved, but to the entire United States during the darkest part of World War II. A special focus on Colonel Doolittle, the mastermind of the raid, shows why he went from major to major general in the span of a year, and one day became a four-star general. A National Museum of the Air Force page provides details on this year’s Doolittle reunion marking the 64th anniversary of the raid on Tokyo. To learn more about one of the most decisive and important missions of World War II and the men who valiantly put their lives on the line to make it happen, go to <http://www.af.mil/library/doolittleraiders.asp>

A WORD OF CAUTION: Individuals needing help preparing a VA disability claim or appeal should always verify with whom they are sharing their sensitive personal and medical information. Various government statutes restrict who may provide this type of service and how. Accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSO) from organizations recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs, local government or state veteran’s liaisons are the only ones that can legally provide this type of assistance. Additionally, legitimate representatives are credentialed by the VA and must provide this identification upon request. Don’t release personal information until you’ve verified their authority to assist you. If in doubt, contact your regional VA center at (800) 827-1000 for assistance.

## **Enlisted Quote For the Week**

“In my 18 years of service I can honestly say that I have never been involved with an organization that directly affects the lives of so many people and more importantly holds a vested interest in improving the quality of life of the enlisted force, equally lobbying both active duty and retiree concerns on Capitol Hill.”

— MSgt William E. Peoples Jr., USAF  
Vice-President Chapter 1660, Incirlik AB Turkey

# VERIZON WIRELESS

Now you can enjoy the benefits of having Verizon wireless cell phone service with special savings just for AFSA members! Log onto AFSA's Web site at [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org), click on the Verizon logo and enter your Member ID to gain access to this exciting new AFSA Member Provider Service. You may also click on the following link: [www.afsamobility.com](http://www.afsamobility.com) to gain immediate access to AFSA's Verizon Web site. The AFSA Verizon wireless member benefits include:

- ★ Wireless service with the nation's most reliable wireless network.
- ★ \$50 "cash back" value only if purchased through the AFSA Web site.
- ★ Take your current phone number with you and get FREE FedEx shipping.
- ★ Customized phone and accessories with a 15-day satisfaction guarantee.
- ★ Fast, easy, and no waiting in lines at the local store.

**NOTE: THIS SERVICE IS AN EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT FOR AFSA MEMBERS AND IS ONLY AVAILABLE ONLINE, NOT IN VERIZON STORES!**

CHUCK  
THOMAS  
OHL

#### Verizon Wireless

Go to [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org) and click on the "Verizon" icon or call Verizon at (866) 784-8296

#### AFSA Banking Center

Go to [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org) and click on the "AFSA Banking Center" icon

#### Auto Rentals

Alamo: (800) 354-2322, Code 93804  
Hertz: (800) 654-6511, Code 0010635  
Enterprise: (866) 279-9963, Code 16WAFSA, Pin AFS

#### Eyewear & Contact Lenses

AFSA/Specs: (800) 804-4384

#### AFSA/Marsh Affinity Insurance Programs

Marsh Affinity: (800) 882-5541

#### Auto Insurance

GEICO: (800) 368-2734

#### Discount Travel & Vacations

Carlson Leisure Travel Services:  
(866) 428-7448 or [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org)  
Inglewood Travel Consultants:  
(800) 873-6446

#### AFSA/MBNA Credit Card

(800) 789-6262, or [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org)

#### Pentagon Federal Credit Union

(800) 616-6600

#### Capitol Hill Update Hotline

(800) 638-0594 (dial 400 at the prompt)  
Call between 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., EST, (M-F)

#### Scholarships

Go to [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org) and click on the "AFSA Education" icon

## AFSA: YOUR ENLISTED VOICE

AFSA works to gain and protect the quality of life benefits of the *Total Air Force* (Active Duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command) enlisted personnel in active, retired, and veteran status and their families. AFSA does this through visits to congressional leaders, visits with Presidential staff members, visits with DoD personnel, and others who may have an influence upon the decisions that could affect the enlisted Airmen.

AFSA was founded on May 3, 1961, as a private, not-for-profit organization in Washington D.C. It was founded by four enlisted personnel, for enlisted personnel. It was federally chartered in 1998. Since its founding, AFSA has had one mission—to protect the enlisted Airmen's quality of life. It has never wavered from that mission. It is the only association with the word "SERGEANTS" in its title because the word sergeant means "to serve," and that is what AFSA does for its members.

If you are not a member, go to our Web site at [www.afsahq.org](http://www.afsahq.org) or call 1-800-638-0594. ext 0 and ask to speak to someone in Member and Field Relations. If you are a member, we greatly appreciate your professionalism in supporting your Association and would appreciate you helping to build your voice by recruiting a new member today!

Actual Coin Size: 1 1/2" in diameter

**FIRST IN THE AFSA  
"PATRIOT" COIN SERIES!**



Obverse View



Reverse View

**The AFSA Memorial Day Coin in the finest brushed nickel—first in a series of four coins commemorating enlisted service! — Only \$10 + S & H**

If you would you like to own a special edition of this coin in .999 pure silver, for \$25 (plus S & H), call AFSA at 1-800-638-0594 to order yours today! Quantities are limited—don't delay.

**Proceeds benefit the Airmen Memorial Building Fund.**

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Enclosed is my check or money order in the amount of \$10.00 (plus \$1.50 Shipping & Handling), payable to: AFSA

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*Please print all information legibly.*

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Name As It Appears On Card (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please Mail Coin to (please print complete mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Each coin will be sold separately—there will be no automatic shipments.**

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**ORDERS CAN ALSO BE PLACED BY CALLING MEMBER & FIELD RELATIONS AT 1-800-638-0594.**