

The Ohio National Guard Alumni Newsletter

VOL 1, Edition 4 – March 27, 2009

The Ohio National Guard Alumni webpage is now operational at the Ohio National Guard website: <http://ong.ohio.gov/>. Click on Community Outreach and then Alumni Relations. Currently we have previous editions of the newsletter available there, as well as the capability for alumni to register for the alumni database and direct email delivery of future newsletters. As previously mentioned, our intent is to develop an alumni forum page as well as other functionality as we expand the program. Your input on what you would like see on line is important. Please take a few minutes and explore the entire website. There is a wealth of interesting information about your Guard there.

Welcome Home Ceremony for the 371st Sustainment Brigade. On Saturday, April 18th, The Ohio National Guard will welcome home the Soldiers of the 371st Sustainment Brigade after their successful deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The ceremony is currently scheduled for 13:00 at the Nutter Center on the Campus of Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Highway, Dayton, Ohio. Everyone is welcome and alumni are highly encouraged to attend.

Mobile Commissary Program. Coming soon to an armory or airbase near you! Realize savings up to 60% on name-brand groceries in comparison to the local economy! The Ohio Army National Guard, Ohio Air National Guard, and the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) Wright Patterson Air force Base are working together to provide our military community commissary shopping at convenient locations.

On-site commissary sales will be available at the Defense Supply Construction Center, 3990 East Broad St., Columbus, OH, Bldg 17, Section 4; 25-26 April; McConnellsville Armory 12-13 July; and Rickenbacker Air Base (BX parking lot) 19-20 July, Hours of operation are: 1000-1900 on Saturday and 1000-1700 on Sunday. Who may shop? Military personnel, dependants, retirees, and National Guard members with a valid ID card are welcome to participate. Plans are also being developed for events at the Toledo Air Guard Base and in the Cleveland area.

DeCA is looking to hire family members and community members to assist with the on-site shopping locations. Check out www.commissaries.com to learn more about upcoming on-site shopping opportunities in your local area.

At DSCC, the Pass & ID Office, Bldg 52 will be open to provide ID card services from 1000-1400 both days to assist military, retirees, and dependents obtain Military and/or Dependent ID cards. To obtain a new ID card, Retirees (Self Sponsor) and Dependents over the age of 18 will need to bring two forms of valid identification with Sponsor present. Valid identification consists of:

Military Dependent ID card, Military ID card, Valid/Unexpired State License, Valid/Unexpired State ID, Valid/Unexpired Passport, Original Birth Certificate with state seal, Original SSN Card, Original Voter Registration Card, and Unexpired Permanent Resident Alien Card.

Pass and ID will also be available to issue decals for vehicles. To obtain a vehicle decal you must have a valid unexpired State License and valid registration in the sponsor or spouse's name, and a Military or Dependent ID card. For additional information contact 614-692-3141.

Current Strength numbers:

Ohio Air National Guard – 5,328 or 114.4% of authorized

Ohio Army National Guard – 11,634 or 113.5 % of authorized

Upcoming Events:

State CSM retirement dinner. CSM Bill Gilliam's Retirement Dinner is scheduled for May 2, 2009, at the Cherry Valley Lodge, Newark, OH. For detailed information and to make reservations, contact MSG Candy Peterson at 614-336-7445.

Ohio National Guard Officers Conference. Friday and Saturday, April 24-25, at The Fawcett Center on the Ohio State University Campus. For details and registration: www.ohionga.org. or call 614-486-4186.

News Releases

President Obama to Unveil New Afghanistan Strategy. (San Diego Union-Tribune, March 25, 2009). President Barack Obama will lay out a new Afghanistan strategy Friday that calls for more U.S. troops and civilian officials and increased aid to combat militants. www.signonsandiego.com

GAO Calls Iraq Pullout 'Massive,' Costly Effort. Expenses May Rise from Wartime Levels (Washington Post, March 25, 2009, Pg. 7). The removal of about 140,000 U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of 2011 will be a "massive and expensive effort" that is likely to increase rather than lower Iraq-related expenditures during the withdrawal and for several years after its completion, government investigators said in a report. "Although reducing troops would appear to lower costs," the Government Accountability Office said, withdrawals from previous conflicts have shown that costs more often rise in the near term. The price of equipment repairs and replacements, along with closing or turning over 283 U.S. military installations in Iraq, "will likely be significant," the GAO reported. www.washingtonpost.com/

‘Global War on Terror’ Given New Name. Bush’s Phrase Out, Pentagon Says (Washington Post, March 25, 2009, Pg. 4). The Obama administration appears to be backing away from the phrase “global war on terror,” a signature rhetorical legacy of its predecessor. In a memo e-mailed this week to Pentagon staff members, the Defense Department’s office of security review noted that “this administration prefers to avoid using the term ‘Long War’ or ‘Global War on Terror.’ Please use ‘Overseas Contingency Operation.’” Coincidentally or not, senior administration officials had been publicly using the phrase “overseas contingency operations” in a war context for roughly a month before the e-mail was sent.

Secretary Gates Halts Stop-Loss Program. The Army National Guard will stop mobilizing soldiers under the controversial program known as stop-loss in September. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said this week the entire Army will phase out the program by January. The Army currently has 13,000 soldiers whose active duty status was extended through the program so they could deploy with their units, including 4,458 Guard soldiers. The Army is the only service using the program, which was first used during the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. It has been used again since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The Army Reserve will stop mobilizing soldiers under the program in August. The active Army will stop using it in January. The goal is to cut the number of soldiers remaining in uniform under the program by 50 percent by June 2010 and to near zero by March 2011. Also, starting this month, the Army will pay \$500 a month to soldiers who are serving under the stop-loss program. The payments are retroactive to Oct. 1, 2008. There are efforts in Congress to make the payment retroactive to September 11,

Summary of FY09 Defense Authorization Act Active Duty Issues. Pay Raise: 3.9% pay raise effective Jan 1, 2009. End Strength: Army +7K USMC +5K Navy -2.8K USAF -12.5K (did not restore previously proposed cut for USAF, even though SecDef has stated that the planned USAF cut will not be imposed). Paternity leave: 10 days authorized for new military fathers, in addition to normal leave. Maximum reenlistment period: Raised to 8 years vs. 6. Warrant Officer mandatory retirement: Change to 30 years as WO vs. 30 yrs (applies to Army WOs only). Sabbatical Program: Authorizes 20 officers and 20 enlisted members per service per year to take up to 3 years off from active duty to pursue personal/professional goals (participants to be paid 2 days’ basic pay per month and keep TRICARE eligibility, but will receive no retirement credit for sabbatical time and will owe 2 months’ active duty upon return for every month of sabbatical). Increase in Service Academy Enrollment: Authorizes up to 4,400/yr per academy starting 2008/09 academic year. Meal Charges in Hospitals: Permanently bans charging hospitalized troops. Temporary Lodging Expense Allowance: Raises maximum daily amt per family on CONUS PCS from \$180 to \$290. Family Separation Allowance: Authorizes payment to both member spouses with dependents if both are assigned remotely.

Military Family Issues. Spouse PCS Weight Allowance: Authorizes 500 lbs for

professional items. Spouse Education: Authorizes programs to help spouses with degrees/credentials/licenses to pursue portable careers. Impact Aid: Authorizes \$35M to assist schools with high proportion of military children, with additional \$15M for schools in BRAC/unit movement areas and \$5M for schools attended by severely disabled military children.

Guard/Reserve Issues. Education: Requires honorable discharge for Guard/Reserve members to use education benefits resulting from active duty (effective 1/28/08 for members who haven't used any of their entitlement). TRICARE Reserve Select Premiums: DoD must recalculate (and presumably reduce) premiums for 2009 and beyond and base them on actual costs for previous year (2009 costs to be based on costs for 2006 + 2007) (GAO previously estimated that Guard/Reserve participants were overcharged by 45%-72%). G/R Medical/Dental Readiness: Services may provide free health/dental care to any SelRes/IRR (if subject to involuntary recall) they deem appropriate and may waive dental copays for Guard/Reserve personnel to facilitate/ensure readiness. Transition TRICARE: DoD may temporarily continue active duty TRICARE coverage for separatees who enter SelRes (continue for 60 days if less than 6YOS; 120 days if 6+YOS).

Health Care Issues. TRICARE Fees: Bar increases in pharmacy copays or retiree fees for FY09. Preventive Care:

(1) Waive TRICARE copays/deductibles for beneficiaries under 65 for colorectal/prostate/breast/cervical screening, annual physical, vaccinations and other services authorized by SecDef (those over age 65 to be reimbursed for copays rather than waived due to budget technicality); (2) establish TRICARE Prime pilot project in three geographic areas to test monetary and nonmonetary incentives to encourage healthy behaviors; (3) Establish smoking cessation program for all under-65s (refund copays for over-65s); (4) Test a "preventive health services allowance" payable to up to 1500 active duty members in each service (\$500/yr single, \$1000 family to purchase preventive services); (5) Authorize SecDef discretion to pursue other innovative programs (e.g., G/R medical/dental readiness and/or stipend for G/R families to continue employer care for families when activated). ECHO Payments: Raise TRICARE payment cap for active duty children with special needs from \$2500/mo to \$36K per year, allowing carryover month-to-month. ECHO for Retiree Children: Require Sec Def report on providing limited temporary transition coverage upon retirement.

Retiree/Survivor Issues. Concurrent receipt: No provisions. SBP: Authorize inclusion survivors of members who died on active duty among eligibles for modest new special survivor allowance.

Wounded Warrior Issues. DoD/VA Senior Oversight Committee (SOC): Extend SOC authority for 1 yr, with SecDef report by Aug 31 with recommendation on continuation. Disability Determinations: Disqualifying condition is to be deemed service-connected unless there is "clear and unmistakable" evidence it existed before service entry and wasn't aggravated by service. Centers of Excellence: Establish centers for hearing loss/auditory injuries and for traumatic extremity injuries/amputations. Bonus Treatment:

Bars recoupment of any paid amount and requires full repayment of unpaid balance within 90 days for member who dies or is separated/retired for combat-related injury/illness

Other Issues. Decorations: Requires SecDef to replace decorations on one-time basis upon request by recipient or next of kin. Salute: Authorizes military/vets not in uniform to salute flag during national anthem. (This information is current and presumed accurate as of today. Some provisions may be amended/changed during the legislative approval process.)

Websites of Interest

<http://www.honorflightcolumbus.org/> Honor Flight Columbus

<http://www.pentagonmemorialphotos.com/> Pentagon Memorial Dedication

<http://www.thepurpleheart.com> National Purple Heart Hall of Fame

<http://www.nasa.gov> NASA website with live TV feed from the shuttle/space station

<http://www.retirees.af.mil> The Air Force Retiree Services website

<http://consumer.discoverohio.com/MilitaryDiscountResults.aspx> Discounts that include retirees

www.ohionga.org Ohio National Guard Officers Association

www.ongea.org Ohio National Guard Enlisted Association

Community Town Hall Meetings Reminder: Major General Wayt invites you to attend a Town Hall event in your area to learn how, through partnership and volunteerism; we can support our Ohio Military Families and Communities. Bellow is a listing of upcoming meetings scheduled in April:

14 April 2009 Athens Community Center 7:00-9:00pm, 701 East State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701.

16 April 2009 American Legion Post 23 7:00-9:00pm, 705 Court Street, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662.

29 April 2009 Revere High School Auditorium 7:00-9:00pm, 3420 Everett Road, Richfield, Ohio 44286.

It is with deep regret and sorrow that we announce the following deaths:

Lt.Col (ret) John Charles Barber, age 62, died March 21. John served in the Ohio Air National Guard as a KC 135 navigator from 1975 until retiring in 2001.

Linda (Jackson) Chase, age 67, of Reynoldsburg died March 19th. Wife of SFC (ret) Harlan Chase, of the Ohio Army National Guard.

I continue to travel around the state meeting with our various alumni associations. If you would like me to attend an upcoming meeting of your group, please let me know. If you have ideas for future newsletter content or other alumni programs and would like to communicate with me directly, please feel free to contact me at 614-336-7336, or by email at james.chisman@us.army.mil. I am also soliciting suggestions for a permanent title for the newsletter.

Thanks for your service.

COL (ret) Jim Chisman
Alumni Affairs Coordinator
Government Contractor