

20081112 Retiree News

1. **The Promise.** **Retiree News** will contain information about benefits, National Guard events, and news about 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@hawaiiantel.net and I will remove you from the **Retiree News** mailing list.

2. **Business.**

- The Hawaii Air National Guard has three new units. **Maj Gen Darryll Wong**, the HIANG Commander, presided over an activation ceremony for three new units on Sunday, November 2, 2008. The ceremony took place in the Courtyard of Heroes in the Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces building on Hickam AFB. These HIANG units will be classic associate units, augmenting the **13th Air Force**, **613th Air Operations Center (AOC)**, and **Air Mobility Division** through the full range of combat operations. The units will be co-located with the 613 AOC.

The mission of the 613 AOC is to provide command and control of real-world air and space operations in the Pacific Theater and to serve as Joint Force Air Component Commander to U.S. Pacific Command. In the event that operations exceed the 613 AOC's capabilities, the Traditional HIANG Airmen will be immediately available to supplement the active duty Air Force requirements.

The **109th Air Operations Group** will have approximately 130 HIANG Airmen and will include pilots, navigators, weapons controllers, flight nurses, and intelligence specialists. **Col Michael "Inch" Compton** will command the 109 AOG. Send congratulatory e-mail: micheal.compton@hihick.ang.af.mil

The **150th Air Operations Squadron** will have approximately 70 Airmen, which will include intelligence, network, strategy, and airspace branches. **Col Jackie Mathis** will command the 150 AOS. Send congratulatory e-mail: jackie.mathis@hihick.ang.af.mil

The **202nd Air Mobility Operations Squadron** will have approximately 50 Airmen split between tanker, airlift, logistics, and aeromedical branches. **Lt Col Robert Hoffman** will command the 202 AMOS. Send congratulatory e-mail: robert.hoffman@hihick.ang.af.mil

(Modified from the State Department of Defense media advisory)

- Veterans to get Housing Refinance Aid. Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' guaranteed home loans. "These changes will allow VA to assist a substantial number of veterans with subprime mortgages," said James Peake, secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Veterans in financial distress due to high-rate subprime mortgages are potentially the greatest beneficiaries."

The VA never has guaranteed subprime loans, but because of the new law, the federal department can help more veterans who have subprime loans, the agency said. Veterans who want to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so for up to 100 percent of the property's value, the VA said. These types of loans have been limited to 90 percent of the value.

Additionally, Congress raised the VA's maximum amount for these types of refinancing loans. With the new legislation, such loans may be made up to \$729,750, depending on where the property is located. Previously, these loans were capped at \$144,000. Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount will let more veterans refinance through the VA, allowing for savings on interest costs and potentially even avoiding foreclosure, the federal agency said.

Originally set to expire at the end of this month, the VA's authority to guarantee adjustable-rate mortgages and hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages also was extended under the new law; it now runs through Sept. 30, 2012. Unlike conventional adjustable-rate mortgages and hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages, the VA limits interest-rate increases on these loans from year to year and over the life of the loans.

The new loan-refinancing options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, signed into law this month. (Taken from Richmond Times – Dispatch, October 28, 2008)

- The [154th Wing](#) recently unveiled their new external website. [CMSgt Kyle Okaneku](#) sent an e-mail telling me about the website. The site's webmaster is [MSgt Kristen Stanley](#) (nee Higgins) and the site is accessible from any computer. Check it out at www.154wg.ang.af.mil. Be sure to check out the "photos tab". Great job by Kristen and the [154th Communications Flight!](#)

- [The first 8.5 week long Air Force Basic Military Training \(BMT\) class](#) began on November 10, 2008. The class, which includes three Hawaii Air National Guard members, graduates on January 2, 2009. Air Force Recruiting Services has a very comprehensive website that outlines what to expect each week of training. A lot of changes since most of us attended BMT. Visit the link at: <http://www.airforce.com/training/enlisted/index.php>

- [College Scholarships Available Through Commissary Agency](#). The Defense Commissary Agency is making college scholarships worth \$1,500 available to qualified children of military families, including those in the National Guard. Applications will be available beginning next week at commissaries worldwide or through a link at www.commissaries.com or at www.militaryscholar.org.

According to Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., Defense Commissary Agency director and chief executive officer, the program has awarded more than \$6.4 million in scholarship to more than 4,000 children of military families since the program began in 2001.

Qualified applicants are dependent, unmarried children of active duty, Reserve, Guard, or retired military personnel. Applicants must be under the age of 23. Also survivors of service members who died while on active duty or survivors of individuals who died while receiving retired pay from the military may apply for the scholarship.

Eligibility is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, along with their sponsors, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current ID card. The applicants must be planning to attend, or already be attending, an accredited college or university full time in the fall of 2009 or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Applicants will be asked to submit an essay on the following topic: What would you place inside a time capsule to help people in the next century understand military life today? Applications must be turned in by Feb. 18, 2009. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants. (Article taken from Defense Commissary Agency press release.)

- Why the COLA boost higher than the military pay raise. With inflation running at a rate of 5.4 percent a year, military retirees, and disabled veterans are getting a 5.8 percent pay increase — while active-duty service members and reservists are getting a 3.9 percent pay increase. Although current service members may feel cheated, there's really nothing wrong with this picture.

The two annual increases became set for the end of the year after two events that came just days apart:

- President Bush signed the 2009 Defense Authorization Act on Oct. 14 that includes the 3.9 percent pay increase, an amount that would have been 3.4 percent if Congress had not backed a bigger increase than what the White House originally proposed. The 3.9 percent military raise, which applies to basic pay and drill pay, takes effect on Jan. 1 and should first appear in mid-January paychecks.

- Two days later, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the September results of its monthly survey of the cost of goods and services that allowed the calculation of the automatic cost-of-living adjustment in military and federal civilian retired pay, military survivor benefits, and Social Security. The 5.8 percent retiree COLA is based on a comparison of consumer prices in the third quarter of the fiscal year — July, August, and September — to the third quarter of the previous fiscal year.

Veterans' disability pay, dependency, and indemnity compensation for survivors, and pensions for low-income veterans, don't automatically increase each year, but Congress traditionally orders that these veterans' benefits increase by the same amount. The 5.8 percent increase takes effect on Dec. 1, and first appears in Jan. 1 checks.

The fact that current and former service members are not getting the same increase should come as no surprise, said retired Air Force Col. Steve Strobridge of the Military Officers Association of America, a former director of compensation for the Air Force. "The pay raise and the retiree COLA are based on different things, and it would be unbelievably rare for them to be the same," Strobridge said.

In fact, over the last 40 years, the two amounts have never been the same. Pay raises since the start of the all-volunteer force in 1971 have been designed to keep military wages competitive with the private sector, he said. The federal government skimped on raises in 1980s and '90s, which some military advocates say allowed a gap to grow between military and private sector raises that peaked at 13.5 percent in 1999. The pay gap has been shrinking since 2000 because annual military raises have been slightly larger than private-sector increases.

The pay gap today is 3.4 percent, and it will fall to 2.9 percent after the Jan. 1 raise. Retired pay increases have a different purpose, Strobridge said. "The idea here is to protect the value of retired pay so the purchasing power of your check remains the same as it was on the day you retired," he said.

Big COLAs — and the 5.8 percent hike is the biggest since 1982 — are not necessarily good news, Strobridge said. “When people get big COLAs, they are getting them because there have been big increases in prices,” he said. “Since most military retirees do not live on their retirement check alone, that means they are not fully protected.”

Anticipating complaints from active-duty service members that they are being cheated by getting a smaller raise, Strobridge said the two different formulas generally work out fine for both groups. “One is bigger one year, the next is bigger another year,” he said. Since 1970, military raises have outpaced retirement COLAs 23 out of 40 times, including in seven of the last 10 years. But retiree COLAs have been larger than military raises in three of the last four years, he said. (Taken from a Military Times article.)

- 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.

3. The Wanted List. Help! I am still looking for these Hawaii 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.

Joseph Damiani
Haruo Shigezawa
James Carptenter
Laura Jones
Edward Uyeda
Loni Mahi
Woody Batula
David Cowen
Dennis Hui
Roy Kudo
Ron Biho
Wayne Z. Higa
Eugene Imai

Tom Gresch
Chris Wilson
Herman Lau
Randy Solomon
Russell Woodward
Byron Kim
Steve Ware
James “Mike” Doolin
Katherine Asato
Richard Kudo
Royden Horibe
Jeffrey Okazaki

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.

Rodney Arguilles
Robert Block (update)
Jun Arconado (update)
Paul de Silva

J.C. Gleeson (Civil Air Patrol)
Francisco Santos (update)
Henry “Hank” Laguatan (update)
Joseph Rayray (update)

AND – I am still looking for more Hawaii 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 **825+** members. A majority of the increase is from the Hawaii Army National Guard members who added their e-mail address to the list. 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 Hawaii 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....

SMSgt Randy Avilla, **154th Maintenance Group**, passed away this past weekend. Randy fought a valiant battle with kidney cancer before succumbing. Services are pending; check your local newspapers for the obituary.

5. Retiree Update.

- Congratulations to **Lt Col Dennis Matsuura**, the new commander of the **169th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron**! His change of command ceremony was on Sunday, November 2, 2008 at the Hawaii Region Air Operations Center (HIRAOC) at Wheeler AAF. Dennis took command from **Lt Col Scott Hoadley**, who has retired. Dennis has come a long way since his enlisted days in the comptroller office. He did an outstanding job there, and in all the positions he held after he received his commission. Know Dennis will do the job! Send congratulatory e-mail: dennis.matsuura@hihick.ang.af.mil

- The Hawaii Army National Guard Commander, **BG Joseph Chaves**, will host an Assumption of Responsibility Ceremony for **Command Sergeant Major Elizabeth K. Kenui**. She is the Hawaii Army National Guard's Command Sergeant Major. The ceremony will take place on Sunday, November 16, 2008, starting at 1500 in the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Classroom Room. The announcement went on to say that, "the ceremony is conducted to promote esprit de corps within the Hawaii National Guard and to celebrate the accomplishments and dedication to duty a Soldier has committed to, in order to reach this level of command and rank within the Hawaii Army National Guard organization." Send congratulatory e-mail: elizabeth.kenui@us.army.mil

- **Maj Gen Darryll Wong**, the HIANG Commander, has selected **Lt Col Tim Fujino** the new HQ HIANG A4 (Logistics) and the Joint Force Headquarters, Hawaii J4 (JFHQ-HI J4). He will start in his new position effective November 14, 2008 replacing **Col William "Pirate" Benton**, who retired. Tim has served as the commander of the **154th Maintenance Operations Flight**. Send congratulatory e-mail: timothy.fujino@hihick.ang.af.mil

- The Hawaii National Guard Command Chief Master Sergeant, **CMSgt Denise Jelinski-Hall**, e-mailed the following announcement on October 30, 2008.

Please join in congratulating **SrA Ryan Yung**, **154th Wing Comptroller Office**, on his accomplishments. Today SrA Yung graduated from Airman Leadership School at McGhee Tyson ANGB, Tennessee. SrA Yung was recognized and honored with the Leadership Award and the Distinguished Graduate Award for Class 08-6. SrA Yung clearly distinguished himself as a leader and represented the HIANG in an exemplary manner. It was a proud moment to see SrA Yung cross the stage not only once but twice to receive his awards. Congratulations SrA Yung on bringing home the gold! Send congratulatory e-mail: ryan.yung@hihick.ang.af.mil

- The Hawaii National Guard units participated in many activities across the state.

The **111th Army Band** and personnel from **Company C, 1 Battalion, 207th Aviation** participated in the Hilo Veterans Day parade. The Adjutant General, **MG Robert Lee**, was the parade Grand Marshall. Great job honoring our veterans!

There was a Freedom Salute Ceremony at the Keaukaha Military Reservation in Hilo. The ceremony recognized personnel who mobilized with [Company C, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation](#), the [Embedded Training Team](#), JSOTF-P (Philippines), and the [1st Battalion, 158th Infantry](#). Several members of the [291st Combat Communications Squadron](#) participated because of their overseas deployments.

Members of the [297th Engineer Detachment \(Fire Fighting Team\)](#) and vehicles from Counter Drug, Recruiting and Retention, and the [29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#) participated in the Waianae Veterans Day parade. Great job honoring our veterans!

The [154th Wing](#)'s F-15 Eagles completed another missing man formation over the Veterans Day ceremony at the National Memorial Center of the Pacific at Punchbowl. Always an important part of the ceremony!

Hawaii National Guard soldiers and airmen; and cadets from our [Youth Challenge Academy](#) supported the Veterans Day ceremony the State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe. The ceremony included a helicopter flyover by the Hawaii Army National Guard aviation. Great support of the ceremony by our Department of Defense!

- Mahalo to [CPT Joseph Tolentino and the soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment](#). They did a helicopter flyover for the Joint Memorial Service at the National Memorial Center of the Pacific at Punchbowl last month. The Oahu AJA Veterans Council, made up of veterans of the [100th Infantry Battalion](#), [442nd Regimental Combat Team](#), [1399th Engineer Construction Battalion](#), and the [Military Intelligence Service](#), sponsors this annual Joint Memorial Service. The service honors the Americans of Japanese Ancestry soldiers who served in these four organizations during World War II. Great support of our veterans!

- [MSgt Rodney "Hot Rod" Arguilles](#), [297th Air Traffic Control Squadron](#), recently resigned from his technician position. Hot Rod is now working as a contractor in the desert, but remains a Traditional member of the Kalaeloa squadron. Stay Safe in the desert Hot Rod!

- Replacing Hot Rod at the squadron is [TSgt David "Mac" McCulloch](#). Mac transfers from the [293^d Combat Communications Squadron](#), a result of the unit organizations division between the islands of Oahu and Kauai. Know Mac will do a super job at Kalaeloa! Send congratulatory e-mail: david.mcculloch@hihick.ang.af.mil

- A published author among us. [Mr. Rex Jones](#), the Department of Defense's State Equal Employment Manager (SEEM) send me an e-mail referencing a book, **A Man of War**. This book's author is David R. Lusk, who happens to be our own [CPT David Lusk](#), the Human Resources Office Labor Relations Specialist. Is another novel in the works?

- During their recent annual meeting, the [Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association](#) elected their officers for the coming year. Congratulations to these new HNGEA officers!

- President: [CMSgt Ethan Toyama](#)
Send congratulatory e-mail: ethan.toyama@hihick.ang.af.mil

- Vice President Air: [MSgt Jan Derego](#)
Send congratulatory e-mail: jan.derego@hihick.ang.af.mil

- Vice President Army: [MSG Gerald Usegawa](#)

Send congratulatory e-mail: gerald.usegawa@us.army.mil

- Treasurer: **SFC Garrett Iha**

Send congratulatory e-mail: garrett.iha@us.army.mil

- Secretary: **SGT Cesar Ramirez**

Send congratulatory e-mail: cesar.ramirez@us.army.mil

- I received an e-mail update from **SMSgt Henry "Hank" Laguatan**. A former HIANG recruiter, Hank retired as an Air Force Reserve recruiter in the Washington state area. He recently started as a civilian medical recruiter at the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington. Hank will do a great job there! Send congratulatory e-mail:

henry.laguatan@us.army.mil

- I noticed in the morning paper that retiree **Lt Col Chuck Prentiss** is the Chair of the Kailua Neighborhood Board. Chuck served in the 201st **Combat Communications Group** and at **Hq Hawaii Air National Guard** years ago. Chuck and the Kailua Board are attacking the coqui frog problem that has started in the area.

Other HIANG retirees serving on Neighborhood board are **MSgt Robert Finley**, the Chair of the Waikiki Board and **MSgt Leonard Tam**, a member of the Kaimuki Board. Thanks to all for their public service!

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

- The HIARNG G3 **LTC Robert Kauhane** is retiring and the G3 branch has scheduled a retirement luncheon for him. The specifics follow:

- When: Friday, November 21, 2008

- Time: 1130-1430

- Where:

Kapolei Golf Course

91-701 Farrington Hwy

Kapolei, Hawaii 66707

- Kapolei Golf Course Clubhouse three-entrée buffet

- Costs:

- \$35.00 for food and gift

- \$5.00 gift only

- Checks made out to: "**Edwin Lau**"

- Suspense for payment: Thursday, November 13, 2008

- POCs:

- **LTC Clara Furubayashi**, 672-1394 or clara.furubayashi@us.army.mil

- **SPC Edwin Lau**, 672-1404 or edwin.lau@us.army.mil

- The Hawaii National Guard Birthday Ball is on Saturday, December 13, 2008 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. This joint event celebrates the 372nd birthday of the National Guard's beginnings. The event Chair, **LTC Laura Soares**, and her committee are planning another superb ball. The evening will include dinner, entertainment, and dancing. Last year's birthday ball was a fun and entertaining event.

The Sheraton Waikiki had blocked off some rooms for those who want to spend the night. The rooms are available at the government rate of \$198.17. Call 808 921-4611 to make your reservations. **This room offer will end on November 13, 2008.** The room offer closes early because the Honolulu Marathon is on Sunday, December 14, 2008, and the rest of the hotel is booked.

The specifics of the Hawaii National Guard Birthday Ball follow:

- When: Saturday, December 13, 2008
- Time: 1700-2300
- Where: Sheraton Waikiki Hotel – Maui & Kauai Ballrooms
- Dinner selections: *indicate your selection to your respective POC with your payment*
 - Macadamia nut pesto chicken breast with Marsala sauce & garlic potatoes
 - Roasted salmon, lemon spinach leaf & tomato basil coulis with Jasmine rice
 - New York steak with baked potato
- Costs:
 - E1-E4: \$48.00
 - E5-E7: \$60.00
 - E8-E9: \$72.00
 - WO1-CW3: \$72.00
 - CW4-CW5: \$84.00
 - O1-O3: \$72.00
 - O4 and above: \$84.00
 - **Retirees: \$70.00**
- Spouses and guests: same price as their military member or retiree
- Checks made out to: **"HING Birthday Ball"**
- Suspense for payment: Friday, November 28, 2008
- Attire:
 - Military: Best Dress
 - Civilians: Coat & tie.
- POCs:
 - 29 IBCT: **SGM Paul Confer**, 844-6032 or paul.confer@us.army.mil
 - HHD-JFHQ: **MSG Vickie Kozel**, 672-1489 or vickie.kozel@us.army.mil
 - 103 TRP CMD: **CSM Ronald Oshiba**, 672-1752 or ronald.oshiba@us.army.mil
 - 298 RTI: **1SG Mark Victor**, 672-1807 or mark.victor@us.army.mil
 - HIANG: **Lt Col Merv Oyafuso**, 448-7253 or mervin.oyafuso@hick.af.mil
 - Retirees: **Galen Yoshimoto**, 672-1221 or galen.yoshimoto@us.army.mil