N **SPIR T 931st AIR REFUELING GROUP**

McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas

February 2002

Defense bill authorizes beefier pay hike, benefits

WASHINGTON—The largest military pay raise in 20 years along with new benefits for reservists are among the provisions of the fiscal year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act.

Signed into law Dec. 28 by President George W. Bush, the act authorizes acrossthe-board and targeted pay raises ranging from 5 to 10 percent with a minimum 6-percent pay hike for enlisted personnel and a minimum 5 percent for officers. Last year military personnel got an across the board raise of 3.7 percent in January with additional targeted raises in July.

The FY 2002 defense bill also approved personnel increases in three major categories in Air Force Reserve Command. Compared to last year, the authorized endstrength climbed from 74,300 to 74,700, the number of full-time reservists went from 1,336 to 1,437, and air reserve technicians jumped from 9,785 to 9,818.

Last year the Department of Defense and Office of Personnel Management agreed that the government should help federal employees pay for health care if they are called to active duty for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation. As a result, this year's bill permits federal agencies to pay the employee and government portions of Federal Employee Health Benefit Program premiums, so families of calledup reservists continue to receive affordable

medical care.

Congress wanted to stimulate participation in funeral honors duty, so it extended to reservists the same rights, benefits and protections received for performing inactive-duty for training. Federal employees gained the option of using military leave to perform funeral duty as reservists, and retirees may serve as members of funeral honors details and receive payment.

Some benefits offered by defense bills are not immediate because DOD and Air Force must implement policies and programs before these benefits are delivered to service members. In some cases, Congress issues additional clarification in later defense bills.

Each year Congress renews one-year extensions of bonuses and special pay. This year's extensions through Dec. 31, 2002, include:

• Special pay for health care professionals who serve in the Selected Reserve in critically short wartime specialties;

Selected Reserve affiliation, enlistment and reenlistment bonuses;

• Special pay for enlisted members of the Selected Reserve assigned to certain highpriority units;

 Ready Reserve enlistment and reenlistment bonuses; and

Government travelers can keep perks for personal use

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE. Texas (AFPN)—People who travel at government expense can now keep the perks they earn for personal use.

A change to Section 1116 of the Fiscal 2002 National Defense Authorization Act allows travelers to keep benefits, said S. W. Westbrook, director of the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee. The benefits include points or miles, upgrades, access to carrier clubs or facilities, or other promotional items

The act was signed into law by President Bush on Dec. 28, and the change went into effect Dec. 31.

The policy applies to promotional items received before, on or after Dec. 31. Westbrook said. The material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional government cost.

One example is the voluntary relinquishing of a seat on an airliner. Under the policy change, a traveler may keep payments from a carrier for vacating a seat; however, no additional expenses, such as per diem, may be paid as a result of the traveler's delay.

"Additional travel expenses incurred as a result of voluntarily giving up a seat are the traveler's financial responsibility," Westbrook said.

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

FEBRUARY 2002



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND

AN OPEN LETTER TO: CIVILIAN EMPLOYERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS OF AIR FORCE RESERVISTS

As our nation recovers from the horrendous events of September 11th, thousands of citizen-airmen of Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) are being called to duty. To succeed in our mission, our mobilized reservists need the support of their fellow reservists, families and employers.

In the partial mobilization of our reserve forces, I'd like to recognize the unselfish patriotic support of our civilian employers and family members. Our country thanks you for the strains you endure, not only during a crisis such as we now face, but throughout the year, as your citizen-airman train and participate in exercises and worldwide contigencies.

We cannot maintain our military commitments around the world without the skills and expertise that reside in the Reserve components. These Reserve forces number hald or our nation's total military might.

Without your continued support, understanding and obvious love of country, it would be impossible to maintain this level of Reserve readiness, as members of Reserve components would have to choose between duty and employments. You are indeed a critical element of this nation's "Total Force."

As our country takes measures necessary to eliminate terrorism, I proudly salute every employer and family member of AFRC personnel. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Blessings to each of you and God bless America!

Sincerely,

JAMES E. SHERRARD III, Lt Gen, USAF Commander



Vol. 7, No. 2

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All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

Surviving Winter

By TSgt. Lloyd E. Robinson 931st OSF

The winter months can be harsh and uncaring and there is nothing any of us can do about it except – prepare.

The winter months have already started and nothing bad has happened yet. But watch out, because once winter conditions really hit, it can mean instant crisis for many of us. Hopefully after reading this information, you'll be better prepared to handle any conditions that may occur.

To begin with, there are precautions you can take to make surviving the winter months more tolerable.

Most of us have to deal with two separate but equally important issues – home and driving survival. Since most of us tend to stay in during the extremely bad weather, we'll start with making sure your home is protected against any blizzard or blizzard-like conditions.

Preparing for the worst is always your best bet. First of all, you should have some very simple yet life saving items readily available. Items such as a working flashlight, a battery powered weather radio, a regular radio, or a television, first aid supplies, extra food, water, medicine, baby supplies, an emergency heating source - heating fuel (propane, kerosene, fuel oil,) and last but certainly not least, a fire extinguisher and a smoke detector. Even though these items seem to be common sense type items, they are often forgotten until an emergency arises.

So what if you must brave the conditions and venture out? Well there are certain precautions you can take for traveling as well.

Before winter hits have your vehicle fully checked and winterized. Most companies have "packages" that fully winterize and prepare your vehicle for safe and comfortable travel. Also make sure your gas tank is always near the full line; running out of gas in bad weather is the last thing that you would want to happen.

If you must travel out and about, take someone with you – if possible, never travel alone and always tell a friend or relative where you are going and about what time you should be there.

Ensure your winter storm survival kit has all of the necessary items in case of an emergency. Items such as blankets/sleeping bags, a flashlight with extra batteries, a knife, sand or cat litter, high calorie non-perishable foods, a small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water, a small shovel, a windshield scraper, a tool kit, tow rope and jumper cables, and lastly, a water container.

While traveling it's also wise to have a compass and current road maps available in your vehicle.

Spirit Spotlight

Tech. Sgt. Hugo Hurtado 931st Aero Medical/Dental Flight

This month's Spotlight selectee is a Hugoton, Kan., native who has been in the Air Force for six years.

Job title: Optometry Technician

Civilian job: Optometry Technician/Student

What I'm reading now: Blues Clues

What I'm listening to now: "Let's Get This Party Started," by Pink

Favorite way to relax: Spending time with family.

Easiest way to annoy me: Lie to me

Most influential people in my life: Myself

If I won \$1 million, I would: . . . Hmm . . . What wouldn't I do?





Around the J Air Force

Points determine retirement eligibility, pay

By Lt. Col. Tom Deall Chief of Air Reserve Personnel Center Public Affairs

DENVER—Most reservists are familiar with points for service; however, misunderstanding sometimes arises on how points accumulate and earn value toward retirement.

Carole Packham, chief of the retirements eligibility division at Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center here, has almost 20 years experience in points management and retirement eligibility.

She said it's important for all reservists to understand the full value of points in their careers, and basic to all reserve careers is looking ahead to retirement.

To retire, a reservist must have 20 satisfactory years with the last eight years of qualifying service in Air Force Reserve Command's Unit Program, the Selected Reserve's Individual Mobilization Augmentee Program or the Individual Ready Reserve. These years must be good years in order to count toward a member's retirement eligibility.

"Satisfactory service is defined as 50 points per year to include 15 membership points," Packham said. "These points are centered around a person's (retention/retirement) year, which begins on one day of one year and ends on the preceding day of the next year. If your R/R vear starts July 1, 2002, it ends June 30, 2003."

The 15 membership points are assessed for membership in the Air Force Reserve, whether active or not. However, they only count toward a good year when they are included with the 35 participation points. These participation points can be earned through Inactive Duty for Training, Active Duty for Training, Extension Course Institute courses and all periods of activeduty service.

down into two 4-hour periods. retired pay. Members can also earn varying numbers of points for ECI courses depending on the length of the course.

Packham emphasized reservists should keep records of the points they earn to avoid any surprises when they reach the 20-year point.

"Once a person reaches the 20-year point and qualified for retirement at age 60, a letter is generated by the ARPC retire-

" Satisfactory service is defined as 50 points per year to include 15 membership points " -Carole Packham **Chief. Retirements Eligibility Division**

Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center

As for the last eight years in the Reserve, officers or enlisted members in the regular Air Force must, by law, convert their commissions or enlistments to the Reserve in order to earn a reserve retirement.

For example, if people serve on active duty with a regular enlistment or commission for 16 years, that time counts toward a retirement. However, if they convert to the Air Force Reserve at that point in their career, they will have to serve an additional eight years to satisfy the requirement for a Reserve Retirement.

Reservists earn one point per day for ADT and active-duty periods. They also earn two points per IDT day, better known as a drill day, which is broken ment division," she said. "Though, by law, technicians have up to one year to produce and mail the letter, the ARPC standard is less than four months."

It is this letter, Packham noted, that confirms satisfactory completion of a 20-year career and, more importantly, the person's eligibility to retire.

Once retired, members are considered gray-area reservists. They remain in this status until reaching age 60 when they begin receiving retired pay.

By law, reservists must apply to transfer to the Retired Reserve by filing an Air Force Form 131. As directed on the 131, they must also submit a Defense Department Form 2656 to start their

Packham said reservists misunderstanding the points accumulation process is the biggest problem she's encountered throughout her career.

"It's never easy to tell someone that they do not have enough satisfactory service to retire and that they must perform additional service," she said. "To avoid this, we strongly recommend that reservists verify their eligibility by calling ARPC if they plan to retire but have yet to receive their 20-year letter."

Another area of concern involves the R/R date. It is critical, said Packham, that reservists satisfy their points requirements based on their R/R date since all reservists have different dates.

Reservists can use the IMA Participation Calculator and Scheduler to plan their participation, print out the schedule, share it with their supervisor to ensure they have a good year. This tool is available on the ARPC Web site by clicking on Points under the Requirements, Separations and Points icon.

Whether a unit reservist, an IMA or someone who drills for points only, keeping track of points is critical, especially when it comes to earning a good year toward retirement.

Reservists who have questions or concerns can reach their representative at ARPC by calling 1-800-525-0102, ext. 71270 or 71272.

FEBRUARY 2002

Don't delay Update DEERS today

By Carole W. Butler

Special to the Spirit

Did you know that you or a family member could lose medical benefits as reservist on active-duty orders if you do not update your information on the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System?

Correct, up-to-date DEERS information is essential, since this data defines your medical benefits while you are on an active-duty tour.

When an eligible family member receives a uniformed services identification and privilege card, or ID card, that information is deposited in DEERS. However, the sponsor must ensure the information is correct. If you marry or re-marry, move, have a new baby, or have a dependent that becomes an adult you must make sure that DEERS data reflects those changes, as well as any others. A dependent is considered an adult when the child reaches the age of 21, unless he/she has a college transcript showing full-time student status. Full-time students are considered dependents until age 23.

If you marry but neglect to register yourspouse in DEERS, that person is not eligible for benefits until the sponsor updates the information. If you move but don't submit the current address of each family member to DEERS, your family may not receive essential messages regarding medical benefits, such as information about the mail-order pharmacy.

If you forget to register a newborn in DEERS, after 365 days the child is not eligible for medical benefits if you are on an active-duty tour until you complete the registration in DEERS.

Making changes to DEERS is easy to do. You can make changes through your Military Personnel Customer Service office. The 931st customer service hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week and 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on UTAs. The customer service office is located in Bldg. 850, room 201C.

If you are making new changes, it's a good idea to bring documentation with you, such as a marriage certificate or birth certificate. Changes could not be easier to make, so do not delay.

Program helps troops become teachers

WASHINGTON—They are disciplined, smart, motivated, goal-oriented and have a disposition to serve.

Sounds like what makes good service members. It also sounds like what makes good teachers, so DoD and the Education Department have resurrected the Troops to Teachers program with an \$18 million infusion from the fiscal 2002 federal budget. The new money will give retiring or separating service members a chance to become teachers. Those who enroll in the program must teach for at least three years.

For more information on the Troops to Teachers program, visit your installation education office or the program Web site at voled.doded.mil/dantes/ttt/.



Courtesy photo by Curtis Tasset, VA Visual Information Specialist

Top Three

MSgt Charles Smith, 931st security forces chief, presents a check to Carlos Escobar, acting associate director of the Wichita VA Medical and Regional Office Center. The check is for \$319.68, which was raised during a McConnell Top Three bake sale Dec. 14. Smith is president of the McConnell Top Three. The money will help defray the costs of the aviary in the photo, which is located in the Nursing Home Care Unit.

Base dining facility closed until Aug. 1

The Chisholm Trail Dining Facility is closed tentatively through Aug. 1. Subsistence-In-Kind customers are invited to eat at Signatures Restaurant in Emerald City. Hours of operation are as follows:

Monday-Friday & Federal Holidays

2 2	-
Midnight Meal	10:15 p.m12:30 a.m.
Breakfast	5:45 a.m8:15 a.m.
Lunch	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dinner	4 p.m7 p.m.
Saturday Sunday &	Goal Dave

Saturday, Sunday & C	Joar Days
Midnight Meal	10:15 p.m12:30 a.m.
Brunch	7 a.m12:30 p.m.
Dinner	5 p.m7 p.m.

All other personnel on BAS or on per diem can dine at the other eating establishments on base such as Burger King, the Twin Lakes Golf Course snack bar, Rendezvous Cafe, and Anthony's Pizza.

Another option is the Flight Kitchen. The hours of operation are: Open Sunday at 11 p.m. through Friday at 7 p.m.

Please note: Ground meals are available to all military personnel who are unable to make it to the dining facility during regular operating hours. Flight meals are for air crews and passengers.

Spirit Shorts

SNCO Academy

Application packages will be due soon for the last 2 classes of this FY (May & Sep) Those interested in attending should be working on their packages now. AFRC has yet to give a suspense so it will be a short one when we receive it. Stop by Group training if you have questions.

ART Orientation

Newly hired enlisted ARTS should attend this course within their 1st year of being hired. It is now an in residence course, held at Robins AFB, Ga. The next class is March 5-6. Contact your unit training manager or Group Training to request a slot.

Airman Leadership

FY '02 dates have been announced. Senior Airmen with 48 months time in service are eligible to attend ALS. Interested members may contact Group Training for further information.

NCO Leadership

Class dates from both Tinker and Ft. Worth Joint Reserve Base (Carswell) are available. Interested staff sergeants and tech sergeants can contact Group Training for information.

Hometown News

Have you just been promoted or received an achievement medal? These are just two of many events that qualify you to fill out a hometown news release. Once you've completed the form, an announcement will be sent to your hometown newspaper to publicize your achievements. Examples of qualifying events for the program include promotions, awarding of the achievement medal and above, re-enlistments, obtaining a college degree, winning airman of the quarter and many more.

Stop by the Public Affairs office in Rm. 221 to fill out your Hometown News Release.

Movin' On Up

Congratulations to the following members for completing Professional Military Education or formal technical training.

The following recently completed PME via correspondence:

SrA Archie Allen, 931st AGS, 01 (ALS); Tech. Sgt. Mark Jacobs, 931st AGS, 6 (NCOA); Tech. Sgt. Roxanne Howard, 931st OSF, 6 (NCOA); MSgt. Wade Jones, 931st AGS, 8 (SNCOA).

The following recently completed or will soon complete formal training: Lt. Doug Crow, 931st ARG, Military Equal Opportunity school; AB Karalee Mulsow, 931st OSF, Intelligence 3 level school; Staff Sgt. Chris Seneff, 931st OSF, Electronic Computer Switching 3 level school; SSgt Steve Tucker ,931st AGS, Crew Chief 7 level school; Tech. Sgt. Melvin Veach, 931st CES, Readiness 7 level school.

Need to outprocess?

If you need to out process for TDY, reassignment or retirement, keep in mind that on UTA weekends the Military Pay Office (Traci or Dee) is only open for business on Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information, contact Tech. Sgt. Anick Wallace at Ext. 3665.

MPF Training

MSgt. Kasl will provide training for all 3As and 3Cs on Sunday of the UTA. The location is Bldg. 850, in the upstairs conference room from 12:20-2:30 p.m.

SGLI and Forms

Reservists are requested to check their Emergency Data Card (DD Form 93) and their Serviceman's Group Life Insurance form at least once a year.

For information, call Ext. 3458.

Need, not status determines AFAS assistance for reservists

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.—

Last year Air Force Aid Society expanded its emergency financial aid to include reservists on annual tour, but duty status is not a roadblock to those truly in need, according to officials here.

"Reservists having financial difficulty can call the Family Support office to request assistance," said Linda Smith, chief of family matters at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command. "The Family Support Office along with Air Force Aid will review the case and determine if assistance can be provided."

Smith cited a reservist who was not in active-duty status but had financial difficulty due to recent medical issues. "His wife had twins prematurely and she suffered with complications during birth," she said. "When the civilian insurance did not cover all the medical costs, his unit learned about the situation and contacted the Family Support office to request Air Force Aid assistance. Air Force Aid was able to provide necessary medical equipment and airfare for a family member from another state to assist with the infant girls."

AFAS has made a special effort to reach out following the Sept. 11 attacks to include special training of unit Family Support directors, said retired Lt. Gen. Michael McGinty, executive director of AFAS.

"Unlike in the past, these directors now have a checkbook and can provide immedi-

"His wife had twins prematurely and she fered with complications during birth," ate support," he said. "Therefore, the needed help is provided without having to wait for approval or a referral to an active-duty base."

> During the final quarter of last year, AFAS helped 77 reservists with loans and grants totaling nearly \$82,000. In October, 23 people received an average of nearly \$1,000 in loans, three got grants totaling \$1,041.50, and only one applicant was turned down.

> Thirty-one applied for and obtained loans totaling \$33,527.27 in November. Another \$20,406 in loans went to 20 reservists in December, along with a \$4,000 loan/grant to another individual.

> > **AFRC News Service**

Pay Hike Continued from Page 1

• Prior-service enlistment bonus until Dec. 31, 2002.

New members of the Participating Individual Ready Reserve, which includes Air Force Academy liaison officers, will accrue two days' access to commissaries for each month's satisfactory participation in required training. Previously, these reservists had to complete a good year (a minimum of 50 points) toward retirement to qualify for commissary access.

Another perk allows federal employees of the executive branch, military members and their family members to retain for personal use promotional items received as a result of using travel or transportation services paid for by the executive branch.

Some proposed legislation benefiting reservists did not make it into this year's authorization act. For example, one provision included in the House of Representative bill but not adopted in conference by the House and Senate would have entitled qualified reserve aviators to be paid the same amount of Aviation Career Incentive Pay as activeduty aviators with the same number of years of aviation service.

AFRC News Service

RODEO postponed

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, III. (AMCNS)—Gen. John W. Handy, commander of Air Mobility Command, announced Jan. 2 that due to current operations tempo, Air Mobility RODEO 2002 is postponed. A projected date for RODEO 2003 is June 21-28 at McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Air Mobility RODEO is AMC's biennial international readiness competition, showcasing airdop, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, security forces competition, assault landings and related ground operations.



Fueling for Freedom^U

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Seyer

PACIFIC REGION — An Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker prepares to re-fuel a C-5 Galaxy over the Pacific Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Air Refueling crews and aircraft are forward deployed to the Pacific region supporting the war on terrorism.



2002 Reserve Pay for Four Drills

	Your of Service															
		Under 2	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over 22	Over 24	Over 26
	O-7 2	795.52	849.56	849.56	855.76	887.72	912.04	940.16	968.24	996.36	1084.68	1159.32	1159.32	1159.32	1159.32	1165.16
	O-6 2	589.60	647.72	690.24	690.24	692.88	722.52	726.48	726.48	750.48	840.76	883.60	926.44	950.80	975.48	1023.36
	O-5 2	471.60	553.68	592.04	-599.24	623.08	623.08	641.80	676.44	721.80	767.44	789.20	810.64	835.04	835.04	835.04
	O-4 2	403.16	490.92	523.68	531.00	561.40	586.12	626.16	657.36	679.00	700.76	708.08	708.08	708.08	708.08	708.08
	O-3 2	372.88	422.72	456.24	493.16	-516.76	542.68	564.32	592.16	605.60	605.60	606.60	605.60	606.60	606.60	606.60
	O-2 2	322.16	366.02	422.60	436.84	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88	445.88
	0-12	279.68	291.08	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80	351.80
	O-3E 2,3				493.16	516.76	542.68	564.32	592.16	615.60	629.00	647.36	647.36	647.36	647.36	647.36
	O-2E 2,2				436.84	445.88	460.04	484.00	502.52	516.32	516.32	516.32	516.32	516.32	516.32	516.32
1	O-1E 2,3				351.80	375.76	389.64	403.80	417.76	436.84	436.84	436.84	436.84	436.84	436.84	436.84
-8	E-9 J							456.52	405.84	479.92	495.28	-510.72	525.88	546.44	566.54	595.60
r Grade	E-6 1	L.					381.08	392.08	402.36	414.68	428.04	441.96	456.04	476.40	496.64	525.04
E.	E-7.1	264.92	289.20	300.20	311.00	.322.32	341.72	352.68	363.52	374.40	385.68	396.68	407.64	426.72	439.04	470.24
	E-6 J	226.80	249.44	260.48	271.16	282.32	300.60	311.64	322.32	333.24	341.08	347.04	347.04	347.04	347.04	347.04
	E-5]	208.20	222.04	232.76	243.80	255.04	270.68	281.36	292.44	292.44	292.44	292.44	292.44	292.44	292.44	292.44
	E-4]	192.48	202.36	213.28	224.04	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64	233.64
1	E-3]	173.80	184.72	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80	195.80
	E-2 3	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24	165.24
	E-1>41	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40	147.40
	E-1<4]	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36	136.36

New pay chart offsetive Jan 1. Normally, manying secondst receive coeffit for four dell pay periods during one worksed with training samewhile

Notes: See following explanations for the underfined numbers located to the right of the various pay grade designations in column one. 1. While serving as JCS/Vice JCS, CNO, CMC, Army/Air Force CS, basic pay is \$13,398,10 (see note 1). 2. Basic pay for a O-7 to O-10 is limited by Level III of the Executive Schedule, which is \$20,133.40. 3. Applicable to O-1 is to Emitted by Level III of the Executive Schedule, which is \$20,133.40. 3. Applicable to O-1 is to Emitted by Level III of the Executive Schedule, which is \$20,133.40.

931st ARG/PA 53280 Topeka Street Suite 221 McConnell AFB, KS 67221-3767

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