



VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Summer Insert

PLAN OF THE DAY

July 2002

The fall muster will be held at the Sports Page on Andrews Air Force Base, 28 SEPT 2002 from 1400 – 1800 (or until we get thrown out). All hands are reminded that the annual muster for pizza is a required event. This year's muster is most important, as we will hold elections for officers.

Sports Page Club, Andrews AFB from 1400 to 1800 or 2-4 p.m. for you non-navy types.
Cost: FREE to members & spouse/significant other or 1 guest, \$5 non-members & all others.

All hands are reminded to come, eat pizza and do your civic duty and vote for your alumni association officers to serve for the next two years.

The nominations committee is beginning to gather the slate, if you are interested in running for one of the officer positions, please send your name to Jim Rozycki (Rozyckijim@aol.com) or 412-487-5854 so it can be added to the ballot. Jim's mailing address is later in the newsletter.

Carrie Blazek is the committee for the Fall Muster, if you are interested in helping Carrie, please contact her directly (mcbaze@erols.com). Also, if you need access to Andrews and don't have a sticker and ID card, you must also contact Carrie to get your name on the access list. Otherwise, show up early, with your vehicle registration, ID card, Drivers License and get a sticker for the auto before trying to get on the base.

More information will be coming to an e-mail address near you soon. Be watching for updates of late breaking news. See you in September!



VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 10

VP68 Alumni Association

Summer 2002

SPRING FLING

The turnout was great, more than 50 alumni were able to attend the gathering.



The years Spring Fling 2002 group photo. As you can see, if you were not there you missed a great time. Fine weather and good food were the fare.



As always there was time for renewing friendships and talking over past events. Rex and 'Packy' can be seen here.



Again this year, your Vice President, Lou Abbott lead arrangements for the Spring Fling. He did a great job of making it all happen. And in the previous picture, a bunch of the admirers thank him for a job well done.

President's Corner

Have all of you retirees out there investigated all of your "gray area" benefits?

Jeanie & I live in Fairfax VA in the heart of the DC Metro area but due to time constraints and horrible traffic patterns we never truly used our benefits. I would occasionally be passing Bethesda and stop in to check-out the beer and soda sales but not much more.

Well, last years Spring Fling helped us discover the MWR campgrounds. We brought our camper down to Pax and parked at Goose Creek. Discussions with other campers educated us on the network of MWR "Fam-Camps" across the US.

<http://usmilitary.about.com/library/milinfo/blafcamp.htm>

We stopped at two USAF FamCamps on our last vacation (F.E.Warren AFB WY (there 9-11) and Ellsworth AFB ND) both equaled or exceeded local commercial grounds.

The host at Ellsworth FamCamp, retired sailor, advised us that we were entitled to eat in the USAF Chow Hall and use the Hobby Shop for truck maintenance. The Chow Hall was the best deal short of free. Jeanie and I ate dinner there for less than \$6 (six) total.

The commissary is another benefit that we never really used due to the inconvenience of Ft. Belvoir and Quantico. Everything is not a deal at the commissary but... if you are (as Sy Syms says) an educated consumer there are deals to be had. The commissaries will have "case lot" sales, some announced and some unannounced, where they almost give away some items (12 frozen TV dinners for \$1 or 48 Kraft Mac& Cheese for \$12).

<http://www.commissaries.com/>

We "gray area" retirees are also eligible for Rod & Gun clubs, Golf courses, Amusement Park discounts and more. We earned these "perks" let's use 'em.

Official Business

S. 2250 - LOWERING THE RESERVE

RETIREMENT AGE: As we predicted during the most recent update, Senator Jon Corzine, D-NJ, has now introduced S. 2250, the companion bill for H.R. 3831. Both bills have identical language. As reported earlier, these bills would lower the earliest reserve component retirement from age 60 to 55 (with age 55 optional, not mandatory).

(a) The number of co-sponsors for H.R. 3831 continues to grow. It now has 58 co-sponsors, and the number is growing daily - thanks to the efforts of the men and women in uniform (or the "gray area") who are affected. They are taking the time to communicate with the senators and representatives who WORK FOR THEM. For a list of co-sponsors of H.R. 3831 to date, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> <http://thomas.loc.gov>, then enter the bill number: "H.R. 3831." Next, click on "Bill Status and Summary," then on "Co-Sponsors." You can also read the actual text of the bill on the "thomas.loc.gov" address. We expect a similar growth of co-sponsorship to begin in the coming days for S.2250.

(b) It is important to note that some misinformation is making the rounds about H.R 3831/S. 2250. Some officials/groups are saying that the legislation would bring along with it (as a "rider") a reduced retirement annuity, or that the reserve point system would be affected; this is misinformation. H.R. 3831 and/or S. 2250 DOES NOT have any provision regarding reduced annuity or revised point calculations. Such an eventuality could not take place without further legislation, or overt action on the part of those who want to attach it to this initiative as a "penalty." No congressional sponsors of H.R. 3831 or S. 2250 have advocated these "penalties." Don't let that misinformation deter you from this effort. We urge those interested in the effort (to lower the earliest reserve component retirement age from 60 to 55) to get the facts and examine the legislation themselves.

(c) In order to succeed in this historic grassroots effort, members who are interested should take a minute or so and contact the local, in-state district offices of their representative and two senators, and contact their offices in Washington, D.C. The message to your representative (congressman or woman) is simple: "I am a voter, and I want you to

co-sponsor H.R 3831 introduced by Rep. Jim Saxton of New Jersey." Tell your two senators, "I am a voter, and I want you to co-sponsor S. 2250 introduced by Senator Jon Corzine, D-NJ." Also, inform your colleagues and ask them to send the same message. In most cases, if repeated potential voters from the same district or state communicate the same message, it becomes a voting issue, and the likelihood of that representative or senator supporting the matter is increased in probability.

(d) To identify and get contact information for your representative in the U.S. House and your U.S. Senator, you may go to one of the following:

For the House and Senate:

<http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/ziptoit.html>

Alternative for the House:

http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_State.htm

Alternative for the Senate:

http://www.senate.gov/senators/senator_by_state.cfm

(e) If you want to mail, fax, or e-mail a letter, we recommend that the text include the following ideas presented in the following sample letter, although you should personalize your letter (message) and add your own reasons why this legislation should be enacted:

(Date)

The Honorable (Name Representative or Senator)
House of Representatives (or United States Senate)
Washington, D.C. 20515 (for the House) or 20510
(for the Senate)

Dear Representative (or Senator) _____,

I am a voter, and I serve in the Naval Reserve. I ask you to support the effort to lower the earliest retirement age from 60 to 55 for Reserve Component members. In the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Jim Saxton has introduced H.R. 3831; (or, "In the Senate, Senator Jon Corzine has introduced S.2250"). As you know, Guard and Reserve members are now integrated seamlessly into this nation's Armed Forces. In fact, today tens of thousands of Reserve and Guard members have been mobilized

in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle, efforts that clearly could not succeed without their invaluable contribution. Yet, reservists are the only federal retirees who must wait until age 60 to collect retired pay.

Equity would dictate that we treat reserve component members fairly. It is bad enough that reserve component members who "voluntarily" subject themselves to unlimited liability cannot begin retirement once they have satisfied the requisite number of "good years." What is worse is that they must wait until age 60, oftentimes well over a decade after military service before they can collect retirement.

The current system stagnates the force by stifling career advancement. Because the reserve component primarily promotes by vacancy, those who are over 55 but not yet 60 occupy slots that could otherwise provide upward mobility for others. Additionally, many reservists continue serving past age 55 only to accumulate a few more points to factor into their retirement pay equation (which is significantly lower than active duty military retired pay). Many do this strictly because they are not permitted to collect retired pay prior to age 60.

Because passing this initiative is one of fairness and equity (and not merely a budgetary burden), I strongly believe that the time has now come for Congress to take the lead on behalf of reserve component members. I urge you to support H.R. 3831 (or S.2250); it will send a strong signal of support to the guardsmen and reservists that you directly represent. Please let me know if you will support this effort.

Sincerely,

(Your Name and Contact Information)

TAPS

Alumni Association member who are no longer among us.

19	DEC 2001	Paul Auth, MCPO	Member

Reminders

There are still prints, rubber stamps and other squadron items available from your alumni association. I am sure we will have a good stock at the Spring Fling, but if you can't wait or need something just in time for Easter, get in touch with Jim Rozycki for current prices. Jim can be found at rozyckijim@aol.com or the below address. We have the VP-68 Lithograph, "The Planes We Flew" rubber stamps and copies of "The Sky is Reserved" video. Order early and allow two weeks for delivery.

Make checks payable to **VP-68 Alumni Association** and send them to:

VP-68 Alumni Association
2414 Rolling Farms Road
Glenshaw, PA 15116

From the Secretary's Corner

Please get in touch with me if you move or change email addresses, it is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your information to me by email - wright_kathleen@bah.com or snail mail - 4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204, Alexandria, VA 22311.

By popular demand here are some Navy web addresses that might be of some interest: Keep watching here, we will add more information in the next newsletter.

www.vp68.org

Is kind of back on the air, we are working to find a more permanent home for the URL. If anyone has any suggestions, contact any of the Alumni Officers.

Naval Reserves

<http://www.navres.navy.mil/>

This site is the central gateway for online resources for the Navy Reserve **Navy Reserve Personnel Center**

<http://www.nrpcweb.nola.navy.mil/Index.htm>

Have any questions regarding reserve personnel records, retirement point accreditation, commissary cards etc? This is your place.

Armed Forces Vacation Club

<http://www.afvclub.com/>

Military Report

Is the military community's largest Benefits and QOL newsletter. Start your own subscription to **Military Report** today at <http://www.militaryreport.com>

Newsletter Inputs

Your inputs for the newsletter should be sent to Dick Fickling, p3css1@aol.com for inclusion in the quarterly mailing. The cutoff for the next addition is Aug 31, 2002. Need items of interest, retirements and other Alumni news.