

Defense bill OKs pay raise, incentives

WASHINGTON – A minimum 4.1 percent military pay raise, more time to use education benefits and more incentive to join the Air Force Reserve are among the provisions of the fiscal year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act.

Signed into law Dec. 2 by President George W. Bush, the act authorizes an across-the-board pay raise of 4.1 percent with higher targeted raises for mid-level and senior noncommissioned officers and mid-grade officers.

In other ways, the FY 2003 defense bill mirrors the Department of Defense Appropriations Act signed by the president

Oct. 23. Both bills call for end strengths of 75,600 reservists and 1,498 full-time Active Guard and Reserve members, as well as 9,911 full-time air reserve technicians in Air Force Reserve Command.

Congress differed, however, over funding for the command. The authorization act called for \$1.5 million more for operation and maintenance funding to train, organize and run the command, and an additional \$18.4 million for military construction.

Several provisions of the authorization act are designed to make life easier for reservists.

To be eligible for a non-regular military retirement, reservists must now serve six years rather than eight years of continuous reserve component service immediately before qualifying for retired pay.

The authorization bill extends the maximum period reservists have to use their Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve benefit from 10 years to 14 years.

The complete story is on the Air Force Reserve Command Web site at www.afrc.af.mil/news/afrcnews/02198.asp. (Courtesy AFRC News Service)

Space Command IMA promoted to CMSgt.

By Anthony Harper
 Staff Writer

The long journey for Danita Hundley toward the rank of chief master sergeant has been that of a soaring F-16 with the endurance of an eagle.

Hundley, the Headquarters Air Force Space Command's IMA to the superintendent of public affairs, was promoted to chief in November.

Within days of assuming the rank, Hundley was also, promoted in her civilian work in personnel, also at AFSPC, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colo.

"It's remarkable that both promotions happened within a few days of each other," Hundley said. "Making chief has been a very long process with many detours along the way. Very supportive friends and coworkers help make honors like this possible."

In 1999 Hundley was selected as the Air Force Space Command's Enlisted IMA of the Year. As the recipient of The 12 Outstanding Airman Award, she spent a week touring and meeting senior leadership. "No words can describe how wonderful this experience was," she said.

Having earned a bachelor's in sociology and master's degrees



Hundley

in management and computer resource information management, Hundley's credentials are not only remarkable, they are extremely varied. In addition to Hundley's education, her military and civilian roles within the Air Force Space Command reflect her diverse background.

"I have never been one to say, 'That's not my job.' Having such a diverse background affords me such confidence," said Hundley.

Although Hundley admits that her dual roles within Space Command can be stressful, she points out that there are certain perks when it comes to wearing two hats. Shy of a cape and a telephone booth, Hundley literally changes from civilian clothes into her military uniform from one office to the other.

"Unlike most IMAs, I have the advantage of regular interaction with the people I work with during my annual tours and individual training days. This allows me to be informed about what takes place in both offices at all times. I don't ever feel like I am in the dark when it comes to my job responsibilities."

When asked what separates her from the rest, Hundley says it's the fact that she takes the time to address important issues and make difficult decisions even if it means straying away from popular opinion. One issue Hundley feels should never be neglected is caring for younger troops as they come up through the ranks.

As a chief, Hundley feels that it is her role to set a high standard of integrity to ensure that younger troops don't lose site of what's important.

Briefs

Better VA benefits available

Reservists who serve on active duty in a combat zone on or after Nov. 11, 1998, may qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs medical benefits.

For most conditions, eligible members receive two years of free VA medical care from the date of discharge from active duty. To qualify, reservists must complete the specified tour of duty on their mobilization orders but they only need to be in a combat zone one day to get VA hospital care, outpatient services and nursing care.

Veterans who served in combat before

Nov. 11, 1998, have to prove that a medical problem is connected to their military service to receive free VA care for that condition, or they must have relatively low incomes.

Those who serve in a combat zone or in comparable hostilities on or after that date don't have to prove either a service connection for their health-care problems or that they have low incomes.

Locations of VA medical facilities are available by checking the local telephone book, going to the VA Web site www.va.gov or calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387). (Courtesy AFRC CC Call Topics for December)

Demand high for new nametags

High demand for the new service dress uniform nametag means up to a three-week waiting time, but the Army and Air Force Exchange Service is working to resolve the supply and demand issue.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper and other senior leaders selected the new nametag Oct. 1. AAFES has order forms available online at www.aafes.com and hard copy order forms available at military clothing sales stores.

A mandatory wear date has not yet been established.

Opportunities

AFSPC has overage funding

Air Force Space Command has funding for the following overage positions.

•0-5, IMA to the Deputy Director, AFSPC/PA (Peterson AFB, Colo.)

•0-5, IMA to the Chief of Media Relations, AFSPC/PAM (Peterson AFB)

•0-3, IMA to the Chief of Public Affairs, 341 SW/PA (Malmstrom AFB, Mont.)

•E-5, IMA to Public Affairs Specialist, 341 SW/PA (Malmstrom AFB)

With overage positions, IMAs cannot compete for promotion vacancies, and there is always the danger of a position being cut. However, the positions at Malmstrom may be funded at 341 SW/PA by October '03.

Interested members may contact Col. Susan Wentzell at DSN 692-6704, commercial (719) 554-6704, or e-mail Susan.Wentzell@Peterson.af.mil.

Tinker AFB gains TSgt. slot

An E-6 traditional Reserve Public Affairs position has been approved for the 513th Air Control Group, Tinker AFB, Okla.

As the Air Force Reserve's only associate Air Combat Command unit, the 513th ACG flies and maintains the E-3 Sentry, America's premier Airborne Warning and Control Systems aircraft.

The successful applicant must recognize the tremendous significance of this

Reserve mission to national defense and should love to write.

Interested members can contact Col. James Kerr, 513th ACG commander, or Maj. Ralph Hawkins, 513th ACG executive officer, at DSN 884-4800.

AFA Council seeks members

WASHINGTON - Members in any Air Force specialty and pay grade have until January to apply for membership on the Air Force Association Reserve Council.

Council members serve for two years and develop AFA policy recommendations on quality of life, equipment modernization and military construction issues affecting Air Force Reserve Command and reservists. Their responsibilities include soliciting concerns, such as pay, benefit and training issues from their constituency for submission to the council.

The council meets four times a year, often in conjunction with AFA Symposium

events, so members may be required to wear service dress and mess dress uniforms for certain functions. Reservists attend these meetings on orders, and the agency of assignment is responsible for paying for the temporary duty trips.

For application requirements or other information, members can contact CMSgt. Troy McIntosh of the Office of Air Force Reserve's Policy Integration Directorate in the Pentagon at DSN 225-9442 or commercial (703) 695-9442.

Applications should be mailed to CMSgt. Troy McIntosh, 12313 Manchester Way, Woodbridge, Va. 22192 and must arrive by Jan. 31, 2003. (Courtesy AFRC News Service)



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Air Force leaders thank employers for supporting war

By TSgt. Scott Elliott

Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – In recognition of the air reserve components' contribution to the war on terrorism, the service's senior leaders are sending their personal thanks to employers of Air National Guardsmen and Air Force reservists.

Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper are sending joint letters and lapel pins in recognition of the sacrifices made in support of the war.

The Air Force is asking guardsmen and reservists to come forward with information about their civilian employers, as this information is not routinely collected.

"The real key to the 'Thank the Employer' program is gathering information from our airmen," said Brig. Gen. Ed Tonini, an activated Kentucky Air National Guardsman working with the Air Force office of public affairs. "We

need every commander and supervisor to make the case, face-to-face, to their people."

So far, the Air Force has collected data from more than 34,000 of the country's 190,000 citizen airmen.

"We know that the war on terrorism and the efforts to ensure homeland security have placed a strain on the employers of our Guard and Reserve airmen," Tonini said. "We also know that many airmen worry about the effects their service will have on their civilian employment."

Sending recognition to employers also acknowledges the "Thank the Employer" program's value as a recruiting and retention tool, Tonini said.

"If you're looking at the reserve component as a viable fighting force, then we'd better have the support of employers or else people won't join, and they won't stay," he said.

"It's about recognition," the general

said. "First and foremost, it's the fact that we have leadership in the Air Force that recognizes that this particular constituency is vital and important to the success of the Air Force.

"We cannot do the job of the Air Force without supportive employers, so we're reaching out to them to thank them and let them know they're full partners in what we're going through right now."

Two Web sites are available for traditional members of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve Command, including individual mobilization augmentees, to provide their employer information.

Members can visit www.yourguardiansoffreedom.com/thanks. Personnel who have been activated for a second year can provide their information at www.yourguardiansoffreedom.com/year2. (Courtesy AFRC News Service from Air Force Print News)

Deployment veterans offer checklist to fight boredom

In preparation for deployments, airmen receive mobility-checklists that outline required action items. While this might keep airmen clothed and clean, below are suggestions from deployment veterans to help fight boredom and prepare for the worst:

- ✓ Resealable plastic bags help contain spills in case a bottle or seal breaks
- ✓ String and sheets become makeshift walls to create 'your section'; string doubles as a clothesline
- ✓ Mini-lamps, battery-operated alarm clocks and ear-plugs are vital survival items for shift workers
- ✓ Sunscreen and insect repellent make hours spent outdoors more bearable
- ✓ Portable CD/cassette players, extra batteries, books and a deck of cards help fight boredom
- ✓ An address book, pre-stamped postcards or a list of e-mail addresses are good ways to keep in touch with family and friends
- ✓ Miscellaneous items to bring include a lock, thick shower shoes for rocky paths, a disposable camera, a debit card and account numbers for bills
- ✓ 'A' style bags are preferred over civilian luggage, with 3 bags the recommended number. (Courtesy Dec. 6 U.S. Air Force Aim Points)

Interim vouchers explained

There has been much confusion over interim travel voucher use during recent extended deployments, according to financial management experts at Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center.

The following excerpt from the "Travel Companion," helps explain the proper use:

Members ordered to active duty for more than 45 days may file an interim voucher every 30 days for reimbursement of accrued per diem and other expenses.

Reservists should file their first 30 days of expenses for long term TDY/TAD when this filing period has elapsed. The first interim voucher should show the arrival date and place with the word "INTERIM" written prominently on the DD 1351-2.

The following vouchers must show "In Place" but have the dates the voucher is covering and the word "INTERIM" written prominently on the DD 1351-2. Subsequent Interim claims should be submitted after each 30-day period has elapsed.

Travel vouchers are to clearly show all travel (including authorized and voluntary returns to the permanent duty station/ residence, side trips, all other travel to locations other than the PDS, etc.).

Please do not indicate MC (Mission Complete) until submitting the final voucher.

More information is available in the "Travel Companion" available on the ARPC home page at arpc.afrc.af.mil under "Travel."