

**IN THIS SECTION:**[Retiree Legislative Priorities](#)[Retiree FAQs](#)[Resources for Retirees](#)[Retirement Appreciation Days](#)[\(RADs\)](#)

AUSA Home >> Programs >> Retiree Affairs Program >> Retiree News >>
2008 Retiree News Briefs

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Army Reorganization

To accommodate the anticipated strength increase of 74,200 by 2010, the Army revealed its plan Dec. 19 to station new active, Guard and reserve units at larger posts across the country. The move would affect 380,000 soldiers and their families, and require \$66 billion to build 20 brigade complexes, 69,000 barracks spaces, 4,100 family housing units and 66 child development centers through 2013. Under the plan:

- Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Stewart, Ga., and Fort Bliss, Texas, will each gain two infantry combat brigade teams
- Fort Hood, Texas, will gain an air defense artillery brigade; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, will gain a military police brigade
- Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., will gain a maneuver enhancement brigade; Fort Bliss, Texas, will gain a fires brigade; Fort Lewis, Wash., will gain an expeditionary sustainment command
- Fort Polk, La., will gain a battlefield surveillance brigade
- Fort Drum, N.Y., and Fort Richardson, Alaska, would gain maneuver enhancement brigades, once environmental analyses at each post are complete
- Two extended brigades would relocate from Germany to Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range, N.M., and
- Two heavy brigade teams would remain in Germany

The Army's new plan for stationing its growing number of troops will affect 380,000 soldiers and family members and cost more than \$66 billion in construction projects through 2013.

Announced Dec. 19, the plan is the largest Army transformation since World War II, and moves the force toward a "modular," or brigade-centric, posture.

The Army's vice chief of staff told reporters at the Pentagon today that the design represents a holistic improvement across the entire service branch.

"We're changing the footprint of our Army to make it more agile, more expeditionary, but also to place our formations and our family members in post camps and stations that have a higher quality of life, have a higher quality of training ranges," Army Gen. Richard A. Cody said.

Dr. James Peake Is Sworn In As New Secretary of the VA

On Thursday, Dr. James Peake was sworn in as the new Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. That was just 6 days after he was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. Dr. Peake, a retired Army Surgeon General, will be focusing on seamless transition of DoD patients to VA ones. The swearing in was held at the VA's National Headquarters and attended by both President Bush and Vice President Cheney. It has an honor to represent TREA at the event. At the end of this Update please find the Statements made by President Bush and Secretary Peake. (The Vice President administered the oath to Dr. Peake.)

NDAA Does Not Change Paid Up Provisions of SBP

The final version of the NDAA unfortunately does not change the paid up provisions of SBP (We have been receiving some calls on this issue). The paid up requirements-the paying retired service member must be at least 70 years old and has been paying into the program for at least 30 years. It will go into effect on the first day of the 2009 fiscal year, which is October 1, 2008.

DFAS To Release 2007 Tax Statements

Military service members, military retirees and annuitants, and federal civilian employees paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) can expect to receive their 2007 tax statements beginning in December 2007.

DFAS customers with **myPay** (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>) access will be able to retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms W-2s, 1099Rs and 1099-INTs, along with retiree and annuitant annual account statements for DFAS customers are projected to be distributed by the dates in the following table:

Form/Document	Available on myPay	Mailed via the U.S. Post Office
Retiree Annual Statement (RAS)	Dec. 10, 2007	Dec. 16-31, 2007
Retiree 1099R	Dec. 18, 2007	Dec. 16-31, 2007
Annuitant Account Statement (AAS)	Dec. 18, 2007	Dec. 19-31, 2007
Annuitant 1099R	Dec. 18, 2007	Dec. 19-31, 2007
VSI/SSB W-2	Not available	Jan. 4-6, 2008
Active Duty Air Force, Army, Navy W-2	Jan. 22, 2008	Jan. 23-29, 2008
Reserve Air Force, Army, Navy W-2	Jan. 2, 2008	Jan. 5-8, 2008
Marine Corps Active & Reserve W-2	Jan. 7, 2008	Jan. 9-10, 2008
Civilian employee W-2	Jan. 4, 2008	Jan. 11-18, 2008
Savings Deposit Program 1099INT	Jan. 18, 2008	Jan. 19-20, 2008
Vendor Pay 1099	Not available	Jan. 27-31, 2008
MISC W-2	Not available	Jan. 19-30, 2008
Civilian PCS W-2	Not available	Jan. 19-30, 2008
NAF Vendor Pay 1099	Not available	Jan. 17-24, 2008
NAF MISC W-2	Not available	Jan. 17-24, 2008
NAF Civilian Pay W-2	Jan. 11, 2008	Jan. 14-18, 2008

According to Lee Krushinski, acting DFAS Operations Director, tax statements available through **myPay** are approved for use by the IRS and have several added benefits for **myPay** users.

"As long as a user has their log in information, they will never lose their tax statements," Krushinski said. "The statements remain online to allow customers to view and print whenever it is convenient for them. Should they need copies later in the year, they are still available."

Krushinski also pointed out the use of "restricted access PINs" allows users to have other family members, tax preparers or other trusted individuals view and print their tax statements without the ability to change any pay account information. This can be of particular interest to military members deployed overseas, retirees, annuitants, or anyone who uses commercial tax preparation services. The restricted access PIN can be established after logging into a customer's **myPay** account.

myPay is a secure Web-based pay information system. One of the many benefits of this system is avoiding risks associated with identity theft. **myPay** has a series of security measures with layers of defense against identity theft. The secure technology provided to **myPay** customers meets or exceeds security requirements in private industry worldwide.

Using **myPay** to access tax statements eliminates the preparation and mailing costs incurred with the traditional distribution methods. Combined with the earlier availability of statements online, this makes **myPay** a better option for many DFAS customers and the Department of Defense.

If customers have forgotten their personal identification number (PIN) or wish to open a **myPay** account can do so on the **myPay** Web site.

Tricare Fees Won't Rise

Other provisions of the 2008 defense bill reject a Defense Department proposal to increase in Tricare fees for retirees and their dependents, and place a limit on the cost of prescription drugs dispensed through Tricare's retail pharmacy program. Other health care-related provisions call for the Defense Department to:

- Submit a plan to establish a nursing school
- Offer bonuses of up to \$20,000 for participants in the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship and Assistance Program
- Increase the maximum incentive special pays and multi-year retention bonuses to \$75,000 from \$50,000 for medical officers, to \$10,000 from \$4,000 for dental officers with fewer than three years' service and to \$12,000 from \$6,000 for dental officers with more than three but fewer than 10 years' service.

VA Funds Caregiver Training

The Department of Veterans Affairs has earmarked \$4.7 million to provide training and assistance to caregivers who provide in-home assistance to disabled and elderly veterans, and to bolster health-care education. The pilot programs will support eight caregiver projects across the country, including:

- Training in how to manage patient behavior and their own stress, at the VA's Memphis, Tenn., and Palo Alto, Calif., facilities
- Video courses will provide instruction in transition assistance, at the VA's Gainesville, Fla., facility
- Round-the-clock coordination between VA and community resources throughout Ohio, centered at the state's VA health care system headquarters in Cincinnati
- Online, video and telephone help for caregivers who assist veterans with traumatic brain injuries at the VA Desert Pacific Network and the VA Sierra Nevada Healthcare System
- A pilot-program workshop on communicating effectively with health care professionals at the VA medical center in Albany, N.Y.
- Computer-based help for caregivers who live in remote areas or who cannot leave patients alone, provided through the Atlanta VA medical center
- Offering relief for up to two weeks per year to workers who provide 24-hour in-home respite care, at the VA medical centers in Tampa and Miami
- Instituting "medical foster homes," which allow caregivers to take veterans into their own homes and provide 24-hour supervision, on the Hawaiian islands of Kauai, Hawaii, Maui, and rural parts of Oahu, through the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Delegation to go to Vietnam

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is planning its seventh delegation to Vietnam, on Jan. 18-27. This goodwill trip will showcase the work of Project RENEW™, the Memorial Fund's mine action and humanitarian program in that country. It will take participants to locations throughout Vietnam that are important to the country's history and notable for the role they played in the war in Southeast Asia. A highlight of the trip will be the groundbreaking for a community center and preschool complex for two ethnic minorities in Ha Bac Village in Quang Tri Province.

For more information about the trip, read the press release here: <http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=613>

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