



EAGLE NEWS

The official Newsletter of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
Central Minnesota Chapter 115

SEPTEMBER THRU NOVEMBER 2009

WHY WILL THERE BE NO COLA THIS YEAR?

We have previously reported to you that it is highly unlikely there will be any COLA this year. Some phone calls we have had have questioned why that is and some have blamed the President or the Congress for taking it away.

However, neither the President nor the Congress had anything to do with why there will be no COLA next year. First of all, it must be remembered that the COLA stands for "Cost Of Living Adjustment." Many retirees seem to have gotten the idea that the COLA is a pay raise. But that is simply not the case.

The process currently used to determine the Social Security COLA, upon which all the other COLAs are

based, was first instituted in 1975. Prior to that time any increases were set by legislation. That resulted in a situation where increasing inflation meant that the various earned benefit payments made by the government decreased in value because inflation ate them away. There was a realization that many government beneficiaries were heading into poverty because their payments purchased less and less. That's why it was decided that government should not benefit from inflation and that Social Security, military retirement and disability payments must be adjusted every year to account for inflation.

The COLA is determined every year by a formula that is set in law. It

cannot be changed or manipulated by the President or any other individual. In order to change the formula Congress would have to pass a new law. Last year, because of the rapid increase in the cost of living, the COLA was 5.8 percent. That compares to an average COLA of 3.1 percent over the last ten years.

However, as overall prices have fallen during the past year, the cost of living has decreased, and that will result in no COLA. That doesn't mean that some prices for the things you buy haven't increased. It just means that overall price increases in some areas have been offset by price declines in other areas. The most notable of these is the decline in the price of gasoline over the past year.

DOD WEBSITE:

On 17 AUG 09 the Department of Defense today launched a new home page, www.Defense.gov, designed to invite participation from the public and make military news and information more accessible. The new Web site will provide quick access to those sites that are most sought by Web site visitors, including

DoD social media sites, the Pentagon Channel and DoD news stories. Prominent on the new home page is a new "We Want to Hear From You" feature that will give users the opportunity to ask questions of Defense Department leaders, vote on policy issues they want explained, and explore frequently asked

questions and answers. The new site, www.Defense.gov, replaces <http://www.DefenseLink.mil> as the department's main Internet entry portal. DefenseLink will remain a news Web site and may be accessed from www.Defense.gov. [Source: DoD Press Release No. 620-09 17 Aug 09 ++]

TREA CHAPTER 115 CHANGES NOVEMBER MEETING DATE

14 November meeting has been changed to Saturday, 10 October

TREA CHAPTER 115 HOSTS 8TH AFRAD

Over 200 attendees from Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas and Canada traveled to Camp Ripley to listen to speakers from many areas of military benefits. They also had the opportunity to sit down with these technical experts and receive personal help for their individual questions. We are most grateful for all the vendors and technicians that took the time to bring their expertise to our AFRAD.



Barbara Oemcke of St Cloud VA



Refreshment Break



Deb St Sauver in ID Card Office



Lunch by CWF Solutions



Jean McDonald at MOAA table



Amber Herem at TRICARE table



Victoria Rock, Dave Hammer & Dick Kirchner at Registration table



Rolando Sotolongo at MN Department of Veterans table



Bill Walter (center) Ft McCoy Retirement Services Officer & MC



Alicia Emanuel & Cassandra Spates of DFAS



Andrea Harter at MN Veterans Homes table



David Hammer & Mark Davidson at TREA table

The Department of Veterans' Affairs' recent decision to allow some Priority Group 8 veterans to enroll in the health-care system has

YOUR GROUP 8 ELIGIBILITY

created questions about eligibility. VA is now providing an online calculator for Priority Group 8 veterans who want to know if they

are now eligible for VA health care. Go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator/instruction.asp

TREA CHAPTER 115 CENTRAL MINNESOTA MINUTES OF 29 AUGUST 2009



Chapter President Ralph Donais brought the meeting to order at 1600 hours following the Camp Ripley AFRAD event.

President Donais led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Secretary Rod Erickson presented the 9 May meeting minutes as printed in the July Eagle News. Minutes were reviewed and accepted by unanimous consent.

Treasurer Dennis Rock reported a balance of \$1594.19 in the checking account and \$3,450.00 in the savings

account at St Cloud Credit Union. The Treasurer's report was filed with the chapter minutes.

Legislation representative Ralph Donais, reported that the Minnesota Legislative body is adjourned until later in the year.

Mark Davidson reported that the Chapter Membership has remained steady at about 270 members. The new recruited member number are filling the vacancies of members who have died.

Unfinished Business

Member(s) are need to attend the UCVL meeting at the Capital at 0800 the 1st Wednesday of the month.

New Business

The Chapter hosted over 200 guests at the Camp Ripley AFRAD. The attendees were pretty divided between the morning and afternoon session. When the audience was asked if they would like a similar AFRAD with two sessions in 2010; they were all in favor of the same agenda and two sessions.

At the Chapter meeting following the AFRAD, the membership agreed to host the that AFRAD on Saturday, 28 August 2010.

The CUB brats' sale at Rogers was successful. The Elk River CUB brats' sale is set for September 4th through 7th. More volunteers are needed.

Good of the Order

Dave Hammer agreed to represent TREA Chapter 115 at the RAD at Mystic Lake Casino on September 26th.

Due to the majority of officers being unable to attend the 14 November quarterly meeting, everyone agreed to change the next meeting to 10 October.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded. **Motion carried.** President Donais adjourned the meeting at 1700 hours.

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Web sites

Chapter 115:
www.trea115.org

National HQ:
www.trea.org

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

October 10, 2009

February 13, 2010

May 8, 2010

August 28, 2010 at Camp Ripley after the Saturday AFRAD

All meetings are held at the VFW Sports Complex 7350 Quaday, Otsego, MN 55330. Phone 763-241-5225. Spouses and guests are always invited to attend.

From I-94 in Rogers: Go north on highway 101 towards Elk River to CR 42/River Road. Turn Left at the light. Second road on the Left is Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow Quaday until you see several brown buildings which is the VFW Sport Complex on your Left.

From Highway 10 in Elk River: From Elk River take Hwy 101 South towards Rogers, exit on CR 42/River Road, turn right at the light onto River Road. The next road on the left will be Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow Quaday until you see several brown buildings which is the VFW Sport complex on your Left.

The Chapter 115 "Eagle News" is scheduled to be published quarterly in January, April, July and October. Send news to dennisvictoria@usfamily.net.



THE

RETIRED ENLISTED
ASSOCIATION

Serving the Total Force

The Voice of the Enlisted:
Retired/Active Duty/Reserves/National Guard
"United We Stand"

Central Minnesota Chapter 115
The Retired Enlisted Association
906 Lookout Place
Elk River, MN 55330

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Our next Chapter meeting is October 10, 2009. Meeting time is 1100. The meeting will be held at the VFW Sports Complex in Otsego. I would ask that you try to make this next meeting. Election of officers (nomination for secretary still open) and our budget for 2010 just to name a few will be decided at the meeting. The schedule was changed due to the many other Veteran's conferences that are going on the weekend of our normal schedule. We also voted at the meeting following the AFRAD, to sponsor the AFRAD again in 2010. It will be August 28, 2010. Do to the number of attendees this year we will also have two sessions again next year.

Our annual AFRAD is in the books for 2009. Thanks to Victoria Rock,

GREETINGS TO EVERYONE!

Dennis Rock, Jim Gray, Dave Hammer, Mark Davidson, Dave Christenson, Dick Kirchner, Rod Erickson and Judy Donais. A special thanks to Rod Erickson who handled the computer for our guest speakers and Dennis Rock who took care of registration. Those that attended thanked us for another great AFRAD. Also we could not have done it without the great support of James Krousey and Deb St.Sauver from Camp Ripley. Jim handled the all around support of the facility and Deb worked through the entire day taking care of those who needed I.D. cards. The catering service at the camp put together another great lunch for those who ordered one.

There are still many challenges at the state and national legislation for our

chapter to work for. As you know there is a constant battle with those in power to take away and not to fulfill what was promised. With the budget problems at both the state and national levels it will be a year that we will need everyone to get involved.

Dennis Rock, Dave Christenson and myself are attending the National convention in Rapid City South Dakota. We will have a report ready for the October meeting.

Our fund raiser projects for this year were a success. Thanks again to all who helped make it possible. Watch for pictures in the Voice magazine. Sincerely,

Ralph Donais, President

IF your mailing label contains incorrect information, or if you are not receiving the Chapter e-mail announcements, notify Mark Davidson at ldavidson77@msn.com