



WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD HRO NEWSLETTER

January 2009

FROM THE DESK OF COL RUNYON

In preparing to write this, my last column as your HRO, I have contemplated what to say (type). After much thought I decided to keep it simple and just express my gratitude for the privilege to have served you as the HRO. This has been an extremely rewarding assignment. Imagine having the opportunity to virtually every day help facilitate a Soldier, Airman or other member of our Guard Family accepting a new FTS position, a position that gives them not just a job but a career; helping facilitate a promotion or pay raise for someone knowing that a Guard Family benefits. Routinely helping others receive their much earned retirement or helping them get medical care they need. Or playing a role in recognizing individuals for the extraordinary work they do for our Guard. These are only a few examples of what it is to be the HRO but I think you can see why I'll miss the assignment – our Greatest Asset, the People! Thank you for allowing me to play a small role in what you do to make our Guard the best in the Nation.

In closing, I encourage you to continue to challenge your HRO Staff to support you as you continue the magnificent work you do everyday. To COLs Bongiovanni and Crane, congratulations on the opportunity you have. I am confident you will find the assignment to be as rewarding as I have.

TECHNICIAN BENEFITS

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS PROGRAM

The ARNG Incentive Awards Board Committee meets quarterly throughout the fiscal year to review supervisor's recommendations for special awards. The Air Guard Board meets when necessary. WVREG 451-1 covers each type of award and will guide you through the requirements of several awards. The 3rd Quarter FY09 meeting will be 19 Mar 2009. If you have questions concerning Technician Incentive Awards call 561-6432 for AGR Awards call 561-6425.

USE OF TIME-OFF AWARDS

Employees who are granted time off awards must request and schedule time off in the same manner as other leave is arranged. Time off awards must be used within one year of the award's approval date. Note that the Defense Civilian Pay System will forfeit the time off award at the beginning of the pay period in which it expires. A time off award is not converted to a cash payment under any circumstance. Additionally, employees who are granted a time off award and who transfer to another agency lose the time off unless it is taken prior to the transfer.

QSI'S AND WITHIN-GRADE INCREASES

What is a quality step increase (QSI) and how does it affect a within-grade increase?

A. QSI is a faster-than-normal WGI used to reward employees at any GS grade level who display high quality performance. To be eligible for a QSI, employees must:

- Be below step 10 of their grade level
- Receive the highest rating available under their performance appraisal system
- Demonstrated sustained performance of high quality
- Not received a QSI within the preceding 156 consecutive calendar weeks

QSI's do not affect the timing of an employee's next regular WGI unless the QSI places the employee in step 4 or step 7 of his or her

(Cont'd) grade. In these cases, the employee becomes subject to the full waiting period for the new step—i.e., 104 weeks or 156 weeks, respectively—and the time an employee has already waited counts towards the next increase. The employee receives the full benefit of receiving a WGI at an earlier date and has not lost any time creditable towards his or her next WGI (FWS do not qualify for QSI).

EXTENDED OPEN SEASON

The Office of Personnel Management has extended Federal Employees Open Season through 31 Jan 2009 in response to concerns over a 2009 Blue Cross and Blue Shield benefit change. Please view the attached link <http://www.opm.gov/insure/openseason/index.asp> for further information and instructions concerning the extended enrollment opportunity. Please contact your HRO representative with any specific questions.

PRESIDENTIAL LEAVE POLICY CHANGE

Since the policy's inception on November 14th 2003, Federal Civilian Employees have been entitled to 5 days of Presidential Leave following a deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. This time was given aid Federal employees the transition back to civilian life and to allow time with family after a prolonged absence. Effective August 6th 2008, OPM issued a policy revision in CPM 2008—21 addressing new changes in the Minimum Service Requirement to Receive 5 Days of Excused Absence for Employees Returning from Active Military Duty. This change clarifies that in order to receive 5 days of excused absence, members must spend at least 42 consecutive days on active duty in support of the GWOT. Furthermore, Federal Employees are entitled to 5 days of excused absence only once in a 12-month period. A new 12-month period begins after the first use of excused absence. These changes in policy were effective August 6, 2008. The following links provide further information.

OPM Q & A:

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2008/2008-21-QA.asp>

CPM 2008-21

<http://www.chcoc.gov/Transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalId=1837>

TECHNICIAN RETIREMENT

TSP FORM 1099-R

The TSP will mail IRS Form 1099-R by January 31 to participants who received withdrawals or other taxable distributions during 2008. They will also post the 1099-R forms on their Web site www.tsp.gov. Make sure the TSP has your correct address. If you need to report an address change and are **separated from service**, use the Account Access section of the TSP Web site.

WORKERS COMP

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) covers a technician 24 hours a day while they are in a travel status, a temporary duty status (TDY), or on a special mission. However, the compensability of any specific injury or illness claim depends on whether or not the employee was engaged in activities essential, or incidental to, the official employment duties at the time of occurrence. A traveling technician is not covered when they deviate from the normal affairs of the trip. Injuries occurring during the course of personal errands and recreational activities are generally not compensable. Some examples: sightseeing, shopping, visiting family members. Conversely, activities reasonably incidental to the official employment duties are generally compensable. Examples: injuries that arise out of the necessity of sleeping in hotels or eating at restaurants.

WVNG Human Resource Office Newsletter

STAFFING

During the past few months, we have seen a negative trend with the in-processing of newly appointed technician employees. This problem seems to stem from the approval notification process and includes:

- technicians arriving without approval notification from staffing
- technicians showing up an hour or more before the appointed briefing time
- technicians arriving without required documentation
- technicians not having reviewed the New Employee presentation on the HRO web-site prior to the in-processing briefing

Supervisors and leaders, it is your responsibility to ensure that your new technicians are educated. The presentation web-link included in the approval notification is a great tool that will help accomplish this task. It is the responsibility of the HRO to make sure that they understand their benefits. Changes will be forthcoming, so please read the approval notifications and help us make sure that our newly appointed technicians are prepared for their in-processing.

AGR

An Active Guard/Reserve service member is eligible to retire with 20 years of Active Federal Service (AFS). But did you also know that there are three different retirement systems? Dependent upon specific criteria, such as your Date of Initial Entry to Military Service (DIEMS), you can qualify for Final Pay, High-3, or CSB/REDUX.

The CSB/REDUX retirement system applies to those who entered Military Service on or after August 1, 1986, AND who elected to receive the \$30,000 Career Status Bonus at their 15th year of service. The service member makes a decision near the point of 14 and 1/2 years of service. To receive this bonus, the member must agree to complete a twenty-year active duty career. Continuation beyond twenty years is possible; however, the member's commitment with the CSB is only to the 20-year point.

The entire \$30,000 bonus, or first installment payment for those electing a multi-year payment option, is paid shortly after the member makes the CSB/REDUX election and commits to the 20-years-of-service obligation. If the member doesn't complete the obligation of the twenty-year career, the member must repay a pro-rated share of the bonus.

The REDUX retirement system and Career Status Bonus is a "package deal." It is the combination of these two items that can be advantageous to many individuals. The REDUX portion determines retirement income (the longer one's career, the higher that income) and the \$30,000 Career Status Bonus provides current cash--available for investing, major purchases, or setting up a business after retirement. To find out more information about your retirement pay options, go to the website: <http://www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/retirement/>

If you are interested in finding out more information regarding CSB/REDUX, contact the AGR Section, 561-6483, 6425, or 6423. angela.kristine.wood@us.army.mil. ~Article by MAJ Wood

ESGR

ANNUAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION ACCESS ON vPC-GR

(ANG, AFRC) -- Updated CEI provides Defense officials visibility of who can be called up for active military duty without jeopardizing the civilian forces responsible for safeguarding our country. Airmen now can access the OSD Guard-Reserve Portal to update their Civilian Employment Information when they log into the vPC-GR Dashboard. Beginning 60 days before their birthday, a pop-up reminder will appear when Ready Reserve Airmen log on to the vPC-GR Dashboard. The reminder will appear until the update has been completed or until their birth date. All ANG and Reserve Airmen, with the exception of Active Guard Reserve members and retirees, are required to complete this annual requirement. A link to the OSD Guard-Reserve Portal <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal> is also located on the vPC-GR home page to help Airmen update their CEI. Any questions please contact Beth White, WV ESGR/Asst. Program Support Specialist.

SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

2009 PAY ADJUSTMENTS

The 2009 General Schedule Pay Adjustments processed with an effective date of January 4, 2009. Check the following link to view the new Pay Charts, <http://www.wvng.af.mil/hro/Pay%20Info.htm>.

For additional assistance call 304-561-6427 or e-mail PSM.WVHQ@wvchar.af.mil

STEM/LRS

Jan - Third Monday (20 Jan) Theme: "Remember, Celebrate, Act, A Day On Not A Day Off"

Feb - Black History Month Theme: "The Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas"

Mar - Women's History Month: "Women Taking the Last Stand to Save Our Planet"



UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14th – Valentine's Day

February 16th - President's Day

March 19th - WVARNG Quarterly Incentive Awards Board Meeting

"We must work unceasingly to uplift this nation that we love to a higher destiny, to a higher plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humanness."

-Dr Martin Luther King

CONTACT NAMES AND NUMBERS

COL Joseph Bongiovanni- Human Resource Officer: 561-6436

Lt Col Linda Smiley- Deputy H.R. Officer: 561-6434

MAJ Kristine Wood- AGR Manager: 561-6424

SSG Ryan Cleek- AGR Human Resource Sergeant: 561-6483

SPC Whitney Pomeroy- AGR Assistant: 561-6425

PFC Brittany Allen- AGR Assistant: 561-6679

CMSgt Scott Miller- Systems Manager 561-6427

TSgt Keelee Goode- Systems Management Assistant: 561-6605

MAJ Doyle Hayes- Technician Manager: 561-6422

Ms. Kay Pahl- Employee Relations Specialist: 561-6432

WOC Siobhan Manier- Classification Specialist: 561- 6357

SSgt Freda Harmon- Classification/Staffing Asst.: 561-6437

CW2 Craig Goldsberry- Staffing Specialist: 561-6433

SSG Rick Riblett- Technician Assistant: 561-6680

SGT Jennifer Campbell-Tech Retirement/OWCP: 561-6431

SSG Michelle Woodall- Technician Assistant: 561-6428

SGT Brooke Goldsberry - Technician Assistant: 561-6429

TSgt Gretchen Close- 167th H.R. Assistant: 616-5330

SSgt Leanne Snodgrass- 167th H.R. Assistant: 616-5317

Lt Col Kenny Hale- EEO/Labor Relations: 561-6430

SGT Charlotte Gower- Training Development Spec.: 561- 6439

MAJ Jeff McCray- ESGR: 201-3476

Mr. Ed Bowman- ESGR: 201-3578

Ms. Beth White- ESGR: 561-6438

HRO Fax Machine- 304-561-6435

