



Voice for the Army - Support for the Soldier

Family Programs

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AFAP Celebrates 30 Years and Adapts to Current Fiscal Climate

This July, the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) celebrates 30 years of grassroots advocacy. At its core is the opportunity for Soldiers, Family members, survivors, retirees, and Civilians across all Army Components to identify, prioritize, and elevate quality of life issues to senior leaders for action and resolution. In the past, AFAP conferences have been held at the local garrison level where issues were either handled locally or elevated to Army Commands, and if needed, to HQDA. Among the highlights of this process was the opportunity for AFAP delegates from all components to be selected to attend and participate in the HQDA conference, held every year in Washington DC. But in AFAP's 30th anniversary year the process might be changing, but the "Voice of the Customer" mission will remain intact. AFAP will transition into a new three tier process:

- 1) New issues will enter AFAP at the Garrison/Unit AFAP Conferences which will begin this Fall/Winter. AFAP delegates will continue to be selected locally and representative of all AFAP constituents.
- 2) Issues will then be sent to Headquarters, Army Staff for Issue review.
- 3) Reviewed issues will then be sent to Command Focus Groups for selection of Issues to be brought before the General Officer Steering Committee at HQDA.

The fiscal reality of today's military is this: programs such as AFAP, that rely so heavily on the perspective and experiences of its constituents must find innovative ways to continue the back and forth discourse with senior leaders. AUSA has always been a proud supporter of AFAP and will continue to be a strong partner in the process. You too can make a difference. Submit your issues via [Army OneSource](#) or volunteer to be a delegate at your local installation/unit. Make your "VOICE" heard. Although the process has changed, the bottom line has not. The AFAP process is YOUR vehicle for change.

Hagel Announces Cuts to Headquarters Staffs

Funding for the top Defense Department staffs will be cut by 20 percent as Pentagon officials work to craft a strategy-based spending plan that accounts for likely future spending cuts, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said yesterday. Speaking to reporters at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida during a three-day visit to military installations in the Southeast, Hagel said the cuts will take effect for his office and those of the chairman of the

Joint Chief of Staff and the service chiefs from 2015 to 2019. "Uncertainty is a tremendous enemy for all of us, for obvious reasons," Hagel said. "I've got to prepare this institution and our people for the facts of life and the reality as it is and the law that is now in place." Hagel said his major objective for the review the department conducted earlier this year was to prepare for probable future cuts. In a letter to the Senate last week, the secretary outlined possible force cuts and civilian reductions in force that may ensue if sequester remains in place beyond the current fiscal year. Read more [here](#).

Exchange Celebrates 118 Years of Service with Deals at Burger King and Express

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) celebrates a past, present and future of savings and service on July 25, the organization's 118th anniversary. In recognition of this historic milestone, the Exchange is offering two fantastic dining deals for authorized patrons to enjoy.

First, Express locations worldwide will be offering any size fountain drink or Gold Peak tea free from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on July 25. In addition, Exchange Burger King locations will be serving Whoppers for only \$1.18 with the purchase of a medium size or larger drink or fry on July 25 and 26. "Offering these deals to our patrons is just another way to thank current and former service members for everything they do for our country," said the Exchange's Senior Enlisted Advisor Chief Master Sgt. Tony Pearson. "As we have done for 118 years, we will continue to go where they go to support them and their families wherever they are called to serve." Read the full press release [here](#).

Pilot Program Enhances Autism Care and Treatment

The rumor of loss of benefits for military dependents with autism and autism spectrum disorders was dispelled recently when TRICARE outlined a pilot program that will enhance their quality of care. With an estimated 8,500 children of active-duty military families having a form of autism, this was not an issue officials felt comfortable curbing with other budgetary uncertainties. Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and director of the TRICARE Management Activity said, "We understand that there's a lot of anxiety in the community of interest around autism about suspected changes that would adversely affect care," he said. "Providing care to children who have autism spectrum disorder and making sure they get the full range of care they need is a priority to us." There's also no change in benefits to anyone enrolled in the basic medical program that began July 2012, Woodson said. An expansion of services through the autism pilot program, he added, will also allow retirees and their families to receive ASD benefits. To read more, click [here](#).

2013 AUSA Annual Meeting and Military Family Forum Registration Open

Registration is now open for the 2013 AUSA Annual Meeting, October 21-23, along with the Military Family Forums. These forums within the Annual Meeting are designed to engage and inform both the military community and the greater civilian community around them. We are excited to connect with military families, share resources, and gain insight from our scheduled speakers and panelists. Our forums this year will feature the Army's top leaders and in depth discussions about holistic approaches to self-care, outside the installation community resources, and the rapidly expanding world of military community and family support via social networking and online outreach.

We look forward to seeing you in October. [Register today!](#)