Tax relief aids military, families

WASHINGTON — Legislation signed by President **George W. Bush** on Nov. 11, 2003, increases the death gratuity payment to $12,000 and provides that the full payment is tax-free.

That portion of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 is retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001, to provide for service members who died in the terrorist attacks the following day and in the ongoing global war on terror, said Army Lt. Col. **Janet Fenton**. She is the director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

"If you are killed on active duty, regardless of whether you're in theater, or in a training accident or die from disease, your family receives $12,000 death gratuity that is not taxed," she said.

From 1991 to 2003, the death gratuity was $6,000, with half being taxed.

Capital-gain exclusion for home sales is one of the most common areas where people look for tax relief, she said. This act allows members to suspend the period of time for selling their homes and taking the tax exclusion and not pay capital gains. It's retroactive to 1997, so military members who have sold homes since 1997 have one year from Nov. 11, 2003, to request a refund for taxes paid.

— K.L. Vantran
American Forces Press Service

Learn more about taxes

The 2003 act also includes above-the-line deductions, extra tax-filing time for service members serving in contingency operations, modifying eligibility criteria of tax-exempt veterans organizations and more. Read the details of this act in the expanded, online version of this story at www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006017.

courtesy graphic

Air Force Edition Monopoly replaces *traditional houses and hotels with air expeditionary squadrons and air expeditionary wings. Players navigate the board with a B-2 Spirit, an air traffic control tower, the F/A-22 Raptor, a satellite, an unmanned aerial vehicle or a C-17 Globemaster III. Players try to control aircraft, rocket and satellite properties to defeat opponents.*

Air Force edition of Monopoly hits base exchange shelves

WASHINGTON — A new game hit the shelves of base exchanges in December when the Army and Air Force Exchange Service introduced Air Force Edition Monopoly.

In the game, "You've been appointed a joint air component commander and must assemble your forces to deploy and fight the enemy. As you accumulate air expeditionary squadrons and wings, remember the words of the Air Force chief of staff: 'Victory belongs to those who can most quickly collect intelligence, communicate information and bring capabilities to bear against targets around the globe.' "

In classic Monopoly risk-taking, deal-making style, players compete to control aircraft, rocket and satellite properties, said **Chris Burton** of the exchange service.

"Also, the chance and community chest cards have been changed to airman's legacy and commander's call cards with comments referring to the Air Force," he said. Even the money is custom-made to complement the Air Force theme.

The edition comes after the success of the Army Monopoly game in August 2002. Based on sales of the Army edition — the No. 1 board game sold by AAFES — Mr. Burton said the Air Force edition is expected to be as successful or better. Customers can purchase the game online at www.aafes.com and in stores.

— Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter
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