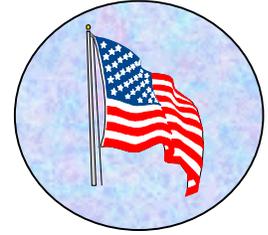




Volume 9 Issue 1



JAN – APR 2004

MEARNG RETIREE NEWSLETTER

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PUBLISHED BY THE MEARNG RETIREE COUNCIL

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Please advise us of mailing address changes and those due to 911. If you do not wish to continue receiving the newsletter, contact a council member.

Continuation of Newsletter The Retiree Council has decided to continue the Retiree Newsletter to spouses of deceased retirees when the spouse requests it. Many items in the newsletter may prove valuable to the surviving spouse.

New Members: Membership is open to retirees of all ranks and gender from all parts of Maine. If you or a retiree you know are interested, please contact a Council member. Retired NCOs should consider getting involved to have their concerns surfaced and to demonstrate they are still an active member in military affairs.

COMMENTARY This is the twenty-fifth Retiree Newsletter, normally published in Apr, Aug and Dec. Our purpose is to keep you informed and provides you a continuing sense of belonging to the Guard after retirement. We hope the newsletter helps accomplish that purpose.

Information is furnished through various sources, and is only made available in this newsletter for your information. Information and comments contained in this newsletter is intended solely for the personal interest of the recipient and should not be considered as an endorsement. If you have an item you would like considered for publication, please send it to the MEARNG Retiree Council, Camp Keyes, Augusta, ME 04333 or call me direct at (207) 626-4380 or e-mail it to dean.soule@me.ngb.army.mil

This newsletter and all previous issues of the newsletters can be found on the following web site:
<http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/retire/>

We are continuing to update our mailing list to include all MEARNG retirees. **If you know any retiree(s) who are not receiving the newsletter, please send their name and address to a member of the Retiree Council or e-mail us.**

- WANTED -

Would you like to be an integral part of the retirement community with providing informative and helpful information to the military retirees and their spouse of the Maine Army National Guard? If you like doing research by surfing the net or other means of gathering information and formatting it in a newsletter, then this is for you.

Looking for a responsible person or persons, (military retiree preferred), to fill the upcoming vacancy of Editor of the Retiree Newsletter. This newsletter is put out to over 1,000 retirees.

Duties would include researching informative information and articles that would be of an interest to the retiree and spouse and formatting it in a newsletter. Mailing of the newsletter would

not be the responsibility of the Editor. The newsletter is published three times a year that covers January to April; May to August and September to December.

If interested contact Dean Soule at (207) 626-4380 or e-mail Dean.Soule@me.ngb.army.mil or contact any member of the Retiree Council.

****RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND**
****SERVICES******

TRICARE for the Northeast Region:

- Sierra Military Health Services -

What is TRICARE?

TRICARE is the healthcare program for Active Duty and Retired military personnel, their families and their survivors. It replaced the CHAMPUS program.

What are the types of healthcare coverage TRICARE offers?

1. **TRICARE Prime:** the only plan requiring enrollment is free for Active Duty Service Members and their families. There is a yearly fee for military Retirees and their family members. Prime offers the lowest out-of-pocket cost when you enroll to a Military Treatment Facility or to a [TRICARE Network](#) civilian provider.
2. **TRICARE Extra:** a plan that offers cost-saving features when you use [TRICARE Network Providers](#).
3. **TRICARE Standard:** a basic coverage (fee for service). Use [TRICARE authorized providers](#).

How do I use TRICARE Standard?

Eligibility: Anyone who is TRICARE eligible may use it except Active Duty Service Members. Make sure you and your family members are properly registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Active Duty Service Members may not use TRICARE Standard; they must enroll in TRICARE Prime.

Enrollment: You do not have to enroll to use TRICARE Standard, and you do not have to commit to use TRICARE Standard for any set period of time.

Deductible: You must meet a deductible before TRICARE will begin covering its portion of the cost for your care.

Choice of providers: You can choose any [TRICARE authorized provider](#) you want, but having this flexibility means that care generally costs more. You do not have a Primary Care Manager, and you may need to file your own claims.

Treatment at civilian facilities: You may use TRICARE authorized civilian providers. You may also use the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) if space is available and after the MTFs serve TRICARE Prime patients.

How do I use TRICARE Extra?

Eligibility: Anyone who is TRICARE eligible may use it except Active Duty Service Members. Make sure you and your family members are properly registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Active Duty Service Members may not use TRICARE Extra; they must enroll in TRICARE Prime.

Enrollment: You do not have to enroll to use TRICARE Extra, and you do not have to commit to use TRICARE Extra for any set period of time.

Deductible: You must meet a deductible before TRICARE will begin covering its portion of the cost for your care.

Choice of providers: You can choose any [TRICARE Network](#) provider you want, but you do not have a Primary Care Manager. If you choose to use providers who are not part of the TRICARE Network, you will pay TRICARE Standard plan fees.

Treatment at civilian facilities: You may use [TRICARE Network](#) civilian facilities. You may also use the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) if space is available and after the MTFs serve TRICARE Prime patients.

How do I use TRICARE Prime?

Eligibility: Active Duty Service Members must enroll in TRICARE Prime. Anyone who is TRICARE eligible may also enroll. Make sure you and your family members are properly registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

Enrollment: In order to use TRICARE Prime, you must enroll. Enrollment commitment is one full year. TRICARE Prime enrollment is **free** for Active Duty Service Members and their family members. Retirees and their family members pay \$230 for an individual or \$460 for a family per year.

Deductible: There are no deductibles unless using the Point-of-Service* option.

Choice of providers: Choose a Primary Care Manager (PCM) from the [TRICARE Network](#). If you live within a 20-mile radius of a Military Treatment Facility (MTF), your PCM will

be a team of providers at that MTF. If you live outside the 20-mile radius, you can waive your access standards and select a PCM at the MTF or select a PCM from the TRICARE Network. You must visit your PCM first to coordinate all of your healthcare needs. If you choose to seek non-authorized, non-emergency care, regardless if the provider is part of the TRICARE Network, you will be charged an annual Point-of-Service* deductible and pay substantial cost-shares.

Treatment at civilian facilities: You have priority treatment at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). You may also use our TRICARE Network of civilian providers according to access guidelines. Visit your local [TRICARE Service Center](#) for more information about access guidelines, or call Customer Service at 1-888-999-5195.

What are the added benefits of enrolling in TRICARE Prime or using TRICARE Extra?

TRICARE Prime offers patients the advantage of a Primary Care Manager, assistance in making specialty appointments, priority access to services at the Military Treatment Facility (MTF), reduced overall costs and no forms to file for TRICARE coverage. There are no deductibles, and Active Duty families have no enrollment fees.

TRICARE Extra requires the same deductibles as TRICARE Standard, but if beneficiaries use [TRICARE Network Providers](#), they will pay reduced cost-shares. Enrollment is not required. TRICARE Extra allows non-enrolled beneficiaries to receive their care from [TRICARE Network Providers](#) on a case-by-case basis at a reduced cost compared to TRICARE Standard.

- Martins Point -

Martin's Point Health Care is a locally owned and operated not-for-profit health care organization. Since their service area covers all of Maine and Southern New Hampshire, they have established networks of hospitals, doctors, specialists, and pharmacies in many locations throughout Maine and Southern New Hampshire.

Eligibility to enroll at Martins Point:

- Active-duty family members, including spouses and unmarried dependent children (until their 21st birthday, or, if they are a full-time student, their 23rd birthday).
- Retirees, their spouses and unmarried dependent children (until their 21st birthday, or, if they are a full-time student, their 23rd birthday).
- Family members of a deceased active duty military member or retiree.
- Acceptance for enrollment is dependent on confirmation of DEERS eligibility (defense enrollment eligibility reporting system) and payment

of applicable enrollment fee or submission of a copy of your Medicare Part B card.

Enrollment Fees at Martins Point:

- There are no enrollment fees for active-duty family members.
- There are no enrollment fees for Medicare B participants. Applicants who show proof that they pay monthly Medicare Part B premiums are exempt from the enrollment fees.
- Retirees and their families pay the same enrollment fees required by regional TRICARE Prime programs. The enrollment fees are:
 - \$230.00 annually for a single applicant or
 - \$460.00 annually for a family of two or more people

House Armed Services Committee Increases Survivor Benefit Plan Payments:

The House Armed Services Committee announced it has approved eliminating the social security offset under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) by increasing the annuities paid to survivors of military retirees who are 62 or older. The SBP provision was included in H.R. 4200, the Fiscal Year 2005 National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed by the committee this evening. Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter credited Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL) for passage of the measure. Miller, a member of the committee, introduced the Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act earlier this year and pushed for its inclusion in the defense authorization act. The issue concerns uniformed services survivor benefits, which, relative to premiums paid, do not match what was promised and provided to survivors of other federal retirees. For more information, see <http://www.house.gov/bilirakis/lateact.htm>

CRSC UPDATE 19:

On 27 April DoD issued the long-awaited new rules for processing of Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) applications including clarification of Special Monthly Compensation and Individual Unemployability. Effective 1 JAN 04, this instruction replaces the guidance introduced last year. The major change is expansion of eligibility to include all combat-related disabilities. Previously, only disabilities rated at 60% or higher or disabilities associated with a Purple Heart could qualify. Also as a result of the new legislation, CRSC payments will include compensation for dependents, as applicable. The new guidance addresses two previously

unresolved issues-namely, Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) and compensation for Individual Unemployability (IU). Both issues will be assessed after the Services have determined which of the applicant's disabilities are deemed combat-related.

In the case of SMC, the Services will have to resolve whether any of the combat-related disabilities constitute the grounds for the SMC award. To make these determinations, the CRSC processing branches will be assisted by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA will provide descriptions of SMC criteria and will provide counsel in unusual situations. Individual Unemployability determinations will be based on the retiree's overall combat-related disability percentage. If the Services award CRSC at 60 percent or greater, and the applicant also has been determined by the VA to be unemployable, then CRSC will be paid at the 100 percent rate, retroactive to January 1, 2004, as applicable.

Retirees eligible under both concurrent receipt and CRSC criteria will have to choose between the two forms of compensation. Recipients will have the option of changing their election on a yearly basis, so as to choose the more advantageous option, as concurrent receipt payment amounts will increase each year for the next 9 years and is taxable whereas CRSC is not. Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is in the process of developing this election system. Applicants also have the option of authorizing DFAS to automatically pay whichever amount is higher. Guidance on CRSC can be found at www.crlegislation.com and www.moaa.org/Legislative/Retirement/CRSCFinalGuidance.pdf. The new application form can be downloaded at www.dior.whs.mil/icdhome/forminfo/FormInfoPage2484.htm or www.moaa.org/Legislative/Retirement/CRSCApplication.pdf

CR activists have worked hard to develop a common contractor database and an on-line application for the next generation CRSC, but the Services decided to go their own separate ways. Activists are doing their best to encourage the Services to have monthly cross-tell meetings; however, software interface problems between DFAS and the VA who maintain separate independent contractors are anticipated. Five different contractors are involved. With more than 150,000 applicants, the interface inefficiencies between the Services, DFAS and VA means disabled veterans and taxpayers will bear the burden. Of special concern are: The VA still has not considered a common information technology system for data sharing with the Services and DFAS.

An interagency group that includes the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and his VA counterpart meets quarterly. However, the group has yet to discuss the unresolved CRSC and CRDP processing issues between the Services, DFAS and VA.

The Services, DFAS and the VA are locked into a tedious and detailed processing problem without the benefit of a centralized processing system.

CRSC activists expect processing problems to persist and inconsistencies to exacerbate as the Services, the VA and DFAS develop their own proprietary software systems without an integration contractor to handle future applications, projected as 150,000 or more. The next phase of CRSC is expected to start very slowly, except for the Army contractor team, because of the transition to the new CRSC program and a myriad of problems, including service support funding, systems integration, contracting, and a large group of new applicants. Therefore, CRSC applicants should use this time to submit a fully documented application that does not require Service coordination with the VA, which will help greatly in the speedy processing of a successful claim. [Source: NAUS Update & MOAA Leg Up dtd 30 APR 04]

MEDICARE PART B OPEN ENROLLMENT:

One of the provisions of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 allows uniformed services beneficiaries who would be eligible for TRICARE For Life (TFL) but are not enrolled in Medicare Part B to enroll without penalty during an open enrollment period through 31 DEC 04. An open enrollment letter will be sent to those Medicare-eligible beneficiaries who don't currently have Medicare Part B and are eligible for the open enrollment.

These are:

- Medicare-eligible retirees, including retired National Guard and reservists
- Eligible qualifying family members and survivors
- Certain former spouses if they were eligible for TRICARE before age 65, and who have not remarried and do not have employer-sponsored other health insurance.
- Dual-eligible beneficiaries under the age of 65 who are entitled to Medicare Part A because of a disability or because of end-stage renal disease

TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Social Security Administration (SSA) to send uniformed services beneficiaries targeted information on Medicare Part B open enrollment. There will be an automatic enrollment by mail for eligible beneficiaries. Upon receipt of the enrollment letter from SSA, Medicare-eligible beneficiaries will be given the opportunity to choose any month in 2004 for their Medicare Part B enrollment. They also will be given the option to refuse Medicare Part B, or if they currently have other health insurance, they will have the option to wait until a special enrollment period to enroll.

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 also includes a provision for beneficiaries who enrolled in Medicare Part B between JAN 01 and DEC 04 and are subject to a penalty for late enrollment. Beginning January 2004, these beneficiaries will have the penalty waived. Beneficiaries who enrolled in Medicare Part B in 2004 and have paid a premium surcharge will be eligible for a rebate. TRICARE Management Activity is working with the CMS and SSA to send a mailing to individuals who enrolled in Medicare Part B between JAN 01 and DEC 04 to notify them of the penalty waiver. For the latest updates, check the Medicare Web site at www.medicare.gov [Source: NAUS Update for 30 APR 04]

Prescription Filling Options:

There is little you can do to cut costs at the pharmacy. Luckily, if you're an active-duty service member, active-duty family member, retiree, or other eligible participant, you can get your prescriptions filled at a very reasonable cost or in many cases free depending on how you proceed. Regardless of which choice you make to fill prescription you will need the original prescription slip and your updated Defense Enrollment Eligibility System (DEERS) information. You can update your address at www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/default.cfm.

If you visit an MTF or a retail pharmacy, you will also need your military identification card. The following options to fill prescription are available to you.

Military Treatment Facilities - Your first choice, and your best option, is your regional military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacy. You can locate one at www.tricare.osd.mil/mtf

At the MTF, both generic and brand name drugs are cost free. MTF pharmacies guarantee to stock all medications that are listed in the Basic Core Formulary (BCF) which is the official must-have list for military facilities.

Retail Pharmacies - Your quickest option is a retail pharmacy. This is the recommended method to obtain antibiotics and other "I need it today" medications. Retail pharmacies are either "network" or "non-network" pharmacies. Make sure you ask whether or not the pharmacy you have chosen is in the network or not prior to submitting your prescription. That way, there will be no surprises. Some of the big chains are not TRICARE pharmacies. However, many grocery store chains and most of the chain marts are in the network. At a network pharmacy, TRICARE recipients pay \$3 for a generic prescription and \$9 for a brand-name drug with no deductible. If you use a non-network pharmacy, the cost share is \$9 or 20 percent of the total cost, whichever is higher, and you have to meet your \$150 annual deductible first. Prime enrollees have a point-of-service cost share penalty of 50 percent and a deductible (\$300 per person, \$600 per family). To find a retail pharmacy near you check the list

at Retail Network Pharmacy at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/retailnetwork.cfm You can also call toll-free (887) 363-6337 inside the United States, M-F 0700-2300, Sat 0900-2000, and Sun 0010-1730. California residents should call toll-free (800) 334-4162.

TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy - Last, is the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/tmop.cfm This option is best for maintenance-type medications, such as those for high blood pressure, heart conditions, diabetes, cholesterol, and so on. With TMOP, you can order up to a 90-day supply of your medication for the same co-payment as a 30-day supply at a retail pharmacy. That's a 66% savings for you. The TRICARE Pharmacy Website at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/tmop.cfm will provide more information on how to use this option if needed. [Source: Navy Lifelines www.lifelines.navy.mil Apr 04 by Holly Selders]

Tricare Pharmacy New Rates:

Tricare Uniform Formulary Final Rule Published The Tricare Uniform Formulary final rule was published April 1, 2004. Effective May 3, the rule will allocate prescription drugs to one of three cost-share tiers: generic; formulary (brand-name); or non-formulary. Beneficiaries who use the Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy will pay \$3 for up to a 90-day prescription of a generic medication, \$9 for up to a 90-day supply of a brand-name medication, and \$22 for up to a 90-day supply of a non-formulary drug. Beneficiaries using a retail network pharmacy will pay \$3 for up to a 30-day prescription of a generic medication, \$9 for a 30-day supply of a brand-name formulary drug, and \$22 for up to a 30-day supply of a non-formulary medication. Under the Tricare Uniform Formulary final rule beneficiaries filling prescriptions for up to a 30-day supply at non-network pharmacies will pay either \$9 or 20 percent of the cost of the prescription, whichever amount is greater, for both generic and brand-name formulary medications. They will pay \$22 or 20 percent, whichever is greater, for non-formulary medications. The payments kick in after they meet non-network deductibles. The military treatment facility (MTF) remains the best value for all users of the TRICARE pharmacy program. By having prescriptions filled at the MTF, TRICARE beneficiaries eliminate their out-of-pocket costs. [Source: Armed Forces News 15 APR 04]

Commissary Update 02:

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has announced that DoD will not adopt variable pricing in commissaries. Variable pricing was initially proposed as a way for DoD to make a profit allowing defense officials to reduce the one billion dollars of taxpayer dollars needed annually to run the commissaries. The decision to scrap the plan came after the release of an independent study group that confirmed that

variable pricing is not a feasible means to reduce taxpayers' cost. The plan was opposed by a number of fraternal military organizations on the basis that it would not have benefited patrons. [Source: NAUS Update for 30 APR 04]

(A word from our Chairman of the Retiree Council)

Hi you all,

If you are not using commissaries, I urge you to do so. What we do not use we lose. I have heard some active duty Navy types say it 30 miles away, or you do not save very much. I am here to tell you that you do save!

Anyone entering a commissary must have an I.D. card. So make sure the spouse has one. Parking is open no military sticker required.

- The Topsham commissary hours are:
 - Saturday 0900-1800
 - Sunday 1100-1800
 - Monday Closed
 - Tuesday thru Friday 1000-1900
- The Bangor Air NG Base commissary hours are:
 - Tuesday thru Saturday 0900-1800
 - Sunday & Monday closed

Your vehicle needs a military sticker or pass to get on base.

- The ANG Base Exchange (BX) AAFES hours are
 - Monday thru Saturday 0900-1700

For other commissaries locations log to the web www.commissaries.com

Hope this helps!!

GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS

AL WHITE

Military Benefits:

Have interests on what military benefits offered? You might want to view this web site <http://www.militarybenefits.com>

****TRANSITIONS****

RETIREMENTS

- Altmannsberger, Richard C. Jr., SGT
- Bragg, Kenneth D., CPL
- Buchanan, Patricia A., SFC
- Dagnese, Kevin M., SSG
- Dawson, Harold E., SSG
- Deshane, Henry J. Jr., 1SG
- Dunton, Stanley W., SFC
- Dyer, Rita M., SSG
- Emond, Daniel M., SSG
- Ferris, William F., SFC
- Gagnon, Gary D., SGT
- Goodman, William A., SGT
- Grant, Howard I. Jr., SGM
- Haskell, Michael A., SSG
- Huntley, Timothy M., SPC
- Johnson, James E., SSG
- Labombard, Scott, B., SGT
- Marks, Terrence W., SGT
- McQueen, Steven F., SGT
- Nadeau, Elmer D., SGT
- Norwood, Frank R., MSG
- Pelletier, David R., SFC
- Pelletier, Edmond P., SGT
- Ryder, Hever A., SPC
- StPeter, Timothy A., SPC
- Smith, Carl G., SFC
- Soucy, David G., SGT
- Susee, Joseph C., SSG
- Thompson, Rex S., SFC
- Veilleux, Andrew C., SSG
- West, Daniel C., SFC

*(**Any names that are not on this list, was not done intentionally, please advise.)*



****TAPS****

- COL (Ret) Homer Ward*
- LTC (Ret) Harold L Larson*
- 1ST (Ret) Phillip R Marston (Blackie)*
- SFC (Ret) Carroll Francis "Fran" Brann Sr*
- COL (Ret) Kelman*
- SFC (Ret) Robert K. Paschal*
- Father Robert E. Lee, COL (Ret)*
- SFC(Ret) Emile Jim Hussiere*

It is suggested that the Headquarters at Camp Keyes, Augusta, Maine be made aware of a deceased retiree. Upon receiving notification, word will be disseminated to Staff and Units of the Maine Army National Guard. This will enable any active guard member who may have served with the retiree to pay their condolences. Persons to call are the Chief of Staff at 626-4280, or to myself at 626-4380 or e-mail me at dean.soule@me.ngb.army.mil



Volunteers Welcome In Helping To Conduct Military Funeral Honors:

The POC for this is:

Christian J. Behr
SSG, MEARNG
Assistant POMSO
(207) 626-4406



All volunteers are welcome to be AP3 certified and placed on the resource list in helping to conduct Military Funeral Honors, honoring those who served. The rendering of Military Funeral Honors is a way to show the Nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. Funds are available to compensate certain categories of retirees and buglers. The process involves training by a Military Service to ensure a civic organization and / or retirees participating in rendering mil funeral honors can perform honors to standard. The training and certification are done here at Camp Keyes by one of our Honor Guard members and takes just a few hours depending on the individuals. After the standard of training is met, a certificate and Mil Funeral Honors pin like the one shown is provided to the individual(s). In addition, a video is provided for refresher training down the road.

Here is the web site address that will lead you to a web page that explains the Authorized Provider Partnership Program (AP3), the program's standards and training, etc. <http://www.mfhcmdrs.osd.mil>

****MISCELLANEOUS****



Maine Armory Rentals:

Affordable, convenient, and flexible event spaces and meeting rooms are available from Sanford to Ft. Kent through Maine Armory Rentals. This Program raises money for the operation and maintenance of National Guard facilities across the great State of Maine by accommodating the public and private use of these unique and historic structures. Designed as multi-purpose spaces, armory drill halls are perfect locations for a wide array of special events. They easily accommodate trade shows, fairs, comedy shows, dinners, dances, wedding receptions, and other large gathering of 300 to 600 people. Like a college field house or large school gymnasium, the drill halls range in size from 6,000 to 14,000 square feet.

In addition, most armories also feature classrooms. Ranging from 150 to over 1,000 square feet, they are great places to hold training classes, meetings, seminars, and other small gatherings of 20 to 75 people.

There are sixteen armory locations statewide including Augusta, Bath, Belfast, Brewer, Calais, Caribou, Ft. Kent, Gardiner, Houlton, Lewiston, Norway, Presque Isle, Portland, Sanford, Waterville and Westbrook.

Maine Armory Rentals grew out of Title 7 MRSA §153 which authorizes the Adjutant General to rent armories for activities that do not conflict with military training missions, and Title 37-B MRSA §152 established an Armory Rental fund and authorized the Adjutant General to use those rental proceeds to help in defraying the operation and maintenance expenses of the Military Bureau's state-owned facilities. Furthermore, 37B MRSA §353 authorizes the use of those proceeds to assist in funding the National Guard Education Assistance Program.. Over the last five years, the Armory Rental & Leasing Program has raised over \$550,000.

The Maine Army National Guard is committed to the accommodation of public and private use of its armories to the maximum extent possible. Such use supports building and maintaining strong ties within the local community, thereby enhancing its recruiting and retention efforts.

Moreover, the revenues generated from such use provide a vital source of funds that can enhance the overall quality of all MEARNG facilities.

Special New Armory Rental Rates Announced for Retirees:

Maine Armory Rentals is pleased to announce that effective 1 January 2004, all retired Guard members will be eligible to rent armories for the special rate of just \$125 per day. This discounted price was formerly reserved for active Guard members only, but is now being extended to all retirees.

“This is a great way to honor our retirees for their years of service,” said Donovan G. Lajoie, P.E., Colonel Retired, Maine Army National Guard and Director of Facilities Engineering. “Allowing these men and women to make good use of our armory facilities will help build and maintain strong ties with the Guard community.”

In order to qualify for this rate, the retired Guard member must be renting the facility for family or personal use only. This would include wedding receptions, anniversaries, reunions, birthday parties, or other similar events. The special discount cannot be applied or transferred to any organization or affiliate group that the Guard member may belong to. In addition, no admission fee can be charged or public access allowed during these events.

Reservations and payment will be coordinated by Maine Armory Rentals. Applications can be obtained directly by calling (888) ARMORY-ME, or visiting the Maine Armory Rentals web site at www.me.ngb.army.mil/rentals.

****UPCOMING EVENTS****

MeARNG Retiree Council Meeting Dates for 2004:

The Council meets on Tuesdays at 0900 in the TAG conference room, Camp Keyes, Augusta. Any retiree or non-retiree is welcome to attend. Satellite teleconferencing is now available to the areas in Bangor, Aroostook County and soon to be Portland. This will eliminate travel and time for those interested in attending the council meetings.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>
February 17, 2004	Tuesday
April 13, 2004	Tuesday
June 15, 2004	Tuesday
August 17, 2004	Tuesday
October 19, 2004	Tuesday
December 14, 2004	Tuesday

All meetings at 0900 hours – TAG conference room
Al White, Chairman

Maine Army Retiree Council Meetings – Calendar Year 2003:

(Not to be confused with the MEARNG Retiree Council. This council is for all branches of service in Maine).

The Maine Army Retiree Council conducts meetings, at various times, which imparts information of interest to all military retirees. Retirees of all military services, and their spouses, are invited and encouraged to attend. Scheduled meetings for 2004 are as follows:

- 09 Apr 2004, 1930 hours, Air National Guard Base, Bangor, Maine
- 11 Jun 2004, 1930 hours, Post 31, American Legion, Washington St., Auburn, Maine
- 12 Aug 2004, 1930 hours, Maine Veterans Home, U.S. Route #1, Scarborough, Maine
- 14 Oct 2004, 1930 hours, Post #40, American Legion Home, Winthrop, Maine

For additional information relative to these meetings, contact either of the following persons:

- CSM Edward L. Davis, AUS (Ret) (207) 469-7918
- CSM Estol R. “Mac” McClintock, USA (Ret), (207) 683-6121
- SFC Harold L. Ware, AUS (Ret) (207) 642-2757

A 4th of July to Remember for Maine’s Military!

We owe our freedom and independence to the members of our armed forces. This Fourth of July Clear Channel radio stations in Maine will thank them for their service and sacrifices with a Red, White and Blue party on Phillips Lake in Dedham. Clear Channel radio stations have teamed up with the Maine Air and Army National Guard to plan the outdoor event, which will take place rain or shine from noon until 5pm.

United Cerebral Palsy has donated their beautiful Camp CaPella facility for the party, which is open to all Maine Service members and their families. Camp CaPella is situated on Phillips lake (below the Lucerne Inn) and offers a sandy beach, pontoon boat and recreational games. Swimming will be available with a lifeguard on duty, clowns and live entertainment will be provided and Old Town Canoe will offer their War Canoe and kayaks for rides and demonstrations. Also as an added bit of fun, the residents of Phillips Lake hold a 4th of July boat parade. The pontoon boat can be decorated and entered into the boat parade for interested participants. Be sure to bring your Red, White and Blue items.

Our generous sponsors are helping to make this party one to remember. Shaw’s Supermarket, Gifford’s Ice Cream, Pepsi,

Old Town Canoe are just a few and more are joining the effort.

Because Camp CaPella has limited parking, a shuttle bus service will be provided from a Brewer location to be announced soon. The shuttle buses will start running at 11:30am and will run until 6pm. Attendees are asked to use the shuttle service to avoid any unnecessary congestion on the Poplar road. Military ID's will be checked before participants load onto the busses. This is a non-alcoholic event.

Clear Channel cares about our service men and women and their families and we look forward to making this a special Independence Day full of fun, relaxation and appreciation.

286th Supply & Service Battalion 4th Annual Reunion 17 July 2004 Time: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. (Rain or Shine)



Former and present members (and guest) of the 286th S&S Bn., to include all units assigned to the 286th S&S Bn., serving between 1968 (year of conception) to the present.

- Location: Augusta Area Military Association Club Camp Keyes, Augusta, Maine Veterans' Services (air conditioned)
- Cost: \$15.00 per person
- (BBQ chicken, Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Salads with all the fixings-
- activities available such as horseshoes
- Cash bar will be provided

Make checks payable to the Augusta Area Military Association

- **contact: Jim Laflin (207) 624-3547 or email james.laflin@state.me.us or Dean Soule at (207) 626-4380 or email dean.soule@me.ngb.army.mil or contact the club.....no later than July 9, 2004**

Reunion of: USS Salamaua (CVE 96) & Squadrons VC 70 & VC 87

Date:

- 01 September thru 04 September 2004

Location:

- Little America Hotel
Salt Lake City, UT

For information contact:

- Calvin Brown
745 Emery St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84104
Phone (801) 359-3214
Fax (801) 952-1343

****FOR YOUR INFORMATION****

Significant Developments WithThe Maine Army National Guard:

The following chart depicts Maine Army National Guard units and personnel currently alerted, mobilized and deployed as well as the operation or mission they are supporting.

MAINE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Unit/Location	Mission	Per	Location	Status
133 rd Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy)	Operation Enduring Freedom	500	Mosul, Iraq	Deployed
1 st Battalion, 152 nd Field Artillery	Operation Enduring Freedom	117	Abu Ghraib Prison, Baghdad, Iraq	Deployed
1 st Battalion, 152 nd Field Artillery	Operation Enduring Freedom	5	Fort Dix, NJ	Deployed
Afghan National Army Training Det.	Operation Enduring Freedom	11	Afghanistan	Deployed
112 th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Bangor	Operations Noble Eagle & Enduring Freedom	4	Fort Drum, New York	Medical Hold
1136 th Transportation Company, Bangor	Operations Noble Eagle & Enduring Freedom	6	Fort Dix, New Jersey	Medical Hold
133 rd Detachment attached to 878 th Engineer Battalion	Operations Enduring Freedom	26	Iraq	Deployed
Company E, 120 th Aviation, Bangor	Operations Enduring Freedom	1	Fort Drum, New York	Medical Hold
Detachment 1, 169 th Military Police Company	Operations Enduring Freedom	7	Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba	Deployed

Maine Army National Guard Soldiers	Security	20	Camp Keyes; Army Aviation Support Facility; and the Augusta Armory	Deployed
Company B, 3 rd Battalion, 172 nd Infantry (Mountain), Brewer	Base Security	28	Air National Guard Base, Bangor, Maine	Deployed
240 th Engineer Group (Combat), August	Operation Iraqi Freedom	77	Augusta, Maine	Alerted – Home Station
Grand Total:		802		

So what exactly is Smith protesting? War in Iraq? A bad economy? Capitalism?

In a statement released Feb. 20, she said: "For some time now, the inequalities that are embedded into the American system have bothered me. As they are becoming progressively worse and it is clear that the government's priorities are not on bettering the quality of life for all of its people, but rather on expanding its own power, I cannot, in good conscience, salute the flag."

Ummm, ok. That's pretty general.

So you want some more equality, huh? Well, head on over to the Middle East. I hear they treat women and minorities REAL nice there.

The sports world is taking notice of her protest. Connecticut women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma said last week that if Smith pulled that sort of stunt on his team, he would probably kick her off.

"We've given people the right to disrespect what this country stands for," Auriemma said. "The flag is a symbol of what this country stands for. Anybody who does [what Smith has done], they have the right to do it, but to me, it's disrespectful and, as a coach, I would have that right not to have that person on my team. Then they can sue me and say, 'You're denying me my rights.'"

As a Tennessee fan, that's the most intelligent thing I've ever heard Geno Auriemma say.

Others are protesting, too.

Last week a 56-year-old Vietnam veteran came onto the court during a game and held an American flag in her face.

Before a road game at Mount St. Mary's, the host school's student government handed out small American flags to more than 500 people that filled the small gym. They jeered Smith at every opportunity and sang "God Bless America" at the end of the game.

When Manhattanville played at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy earlier last month, more than 300 midshipman greeted Smith with chants of "USA! USA!" and "Leave our country!"

I'll admit that whether or not we agree with Smith, she has the right to do what she is doing. However, the mere fact that she HAS that right is all the more reason she should not do it. If she tried to protest in a like manner in some other countries, she would have been arrested for treason and probably killed by now.

When someone disrespects the flag, they disrespect this country and everyone in it. She's disgracing everyone that has ever lived in this great country—and every American soldier that has fought and died for her and for you and for me. She's disgracing everything that gives her the right to be disgraceful.

Turn Your Back on the Flag? NEVER!

by Wes Todd
3-4-03

It's March Madness time again.

Usually at this point in the college basketball season, the nation shifts its attention to the conference tournaments, the NCAA selection committee, the ever-ready-to-burst "bubble" and which mid-major teams will be this year's Cinderellas.

But this year, none of that matters quite as much as what is going on at the small Division III school in the suburbs of New York City.

Perhaps you've heard about Tori Smith, the Manhattanville senior forward who refuses to face the American flag during the pregame national anthem. Instead, while standing in a line with the rest of her teammates, she turns from the flag at a 90-degree angle.

Political protests are not new in sports. In 1968, two U.S. track athletes gave the "Black Power" salute during the national anthem after winning gold and silver medals at the Olympics in Mexico City. Four years later, at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, 11 Israeli athletes were killed by Palestinian terrorists.

A similar case to Smith's protest was seen in the NBA in 1996. Denver Nuggets player Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf refused to stand during the national anthem, claiming it was symbolic of torment and repression toward African-Americans and Muslims. After he was indefinitely suspended without pay and stood to lose about \$30,000 per game, he quickly decided that maybe standing up for the anthem wasn't such a bad idea.

I hope she realizes that the national attention she is receiving will haunt her for the rest of her life, if and when she chooses to settle down in America and raise a family. I also hope she's ready for the repercussions. The two American athletes that gave the "Black Power" salute at the 1968 Olympics were blackballed from receiving any type of employment in the United States for the next 25 years, not to mention kicked out of the Olympics.

There are many ways to express your political views. You can write letters to your representatives in Congress, or write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. You can do something as simple as not voting. You can carry a sign and march in a parade. You can go on a hunger strike. You can put annoying flyers on the windshields of cars and on light poles, or paint the windows of your gas-guzzling SUV with "No Blood for Oil" slogans (yes, I have seen this). You can wear t-shirts that are about two sizes too small with political messages on them like this guy in one of my classes. For all I care, you can streak down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington in sub-freezing temperatures to protest sweat shop labor on designer jeans.

But you CANNOT turn your back on the American flag under any circumstances.

CRDP UPDATE 25: According to a DFAS website posting, Concurrent Receipt or Concurrent Disability Pay (CDP) is now called Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP); and, although the name has changed, the program has not. DFAS said it paid 144,098 retirees their CRDP payments on time on February 2, 2004 and that it paid 2,620 retirees whose retired pay is calculated based on a percentage of disability. Due to the complexity of the calculation, these retirees received their electronic fund transfer deposits on February 13, 2004. Retirees who receive hard-copy checks in the mail have been issued payments as well and should allow for mailing time. On-going CRDP payments will be paid on the first business day of each month. These payments will continue without the need for further action from eligible retirees. In the future, CRDP rates will automatically increase or decrease based on the percentage of disability reported by the VA.

Retirees from the National Guard or the Reserve with VA disability ratings of 50% or better, no matter what they had been told in the past, may still qualify for Concurrent Retired and Disability Pay (CRDP). Until recently Guard and Reserve retirees were told they had to have a minimum of 7200 points to qualify for CRDP. Specifically any retired reservist or guardsman that has "20 Good Years" and meets the remaining eligibility requirements is eligible to get their CRDP benefits just like their active duty counterparts. Eligibility for the CRDP includes all chapter 61 medically retired personnel with twenty years of service whether their service was twenty or more years of active duty or twenty or more GOOD YEARS for Reserve Retirement (section 12732

of US Code 10). A GOOD YEAR is one in which the retiree had earned a minimum of 50 points. Guard or Reserve retirees, who believe they qualify for CRDP but are not currently receiving it or had been turned down in the past, should take the following steps:

Gather all of your documentation including your letter of Retirement Eligibility ("20 Good Years Letter") and your last point summary.

Call DFAS at the toll free number 1-800-321-1080 to determine the reason for nonpayment.

[Source: NAUS Update 9 APR 04]

CRSC UPDATE 18: DFAS is sitting on thousands of approved CRSC claims while waiting for DOD to issue an implementation policy letter because its lawyers only recently reconciled the legal connection between CRSC and Individual Unemployable (IU) and the method of determination. Months ago, it was decided to pay disabled retirees with IU rated by VA at the 100% rate when their CRSC is at least 60%. DOD has said the decision will be released soon, since it was only a procedural problem. Not a policy change. Driving the DOD internal push for resolution is the fact that the retroactive CRSC payments to many of the affected retirees now exceed \$10,000.00 each and increases each month and the congressional concern generated by retirees caught up in the procedural quagmire. Furthermore, the lack of funding for DFAS and the military departments, each of which also has its own set of processing procedure problems, is a major contributor to swift payments once the awaited policy directive regarding CRSC processing is received. Additional details regarding CRSC processing, problems, and related information can be found at www.crlegislation.com. [Source: NAUS Update 9 APR 04]

DoD officials have indicated they expect to release the new application form in the next two weeks. In the interim service boards responsible for processing CRSC applications have informed MOAA that they will accept applications from all eligible retirees using the existing forms. In other words, retirees with combat-related disabilities of 10-50 percent do not have to wait for DoD to publish the revised form. Applicants are advised to simply ignore any references to disabilities payable only for 60 percent and above or to the requirement for a Guard/Reserve retiree to have 7200 or more retirement points. Those criteria were applicable for payments in 2003, but no longer apply as of 1 JAN 04. A copy of the application form and a list of questions and answers can be found at www.moaa.org/benefitsinfo/crsc/crsc.asp [Source: MOAA's Legislative Update 9 APR 04]

SBP REFORM UPDATE 04: Rep. Chet Edwards, (D-TX) has introduced a discharge petition (H. Res. 584) in an effort to force a floor vote on H.R. 548, a bill sponsored by Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL). Rep. Miller's bill would eliminate

the offset of the Survivor Benefit Plan for spouses of deceased military retirees. At present, spouses face a reduction from 55 percent to 35 percent of their SBP benefits when they reach age 62. H.R. 548 currently has 301 co-sponsors; only 218 signatures are needed on the discharge petition to force a floor vote on the measure. In mid-March Rep. Miller offered an amendment on the budget that would have provided \$500 million over five years to fund H.R. 548; it was opposed by the 13 Republican members of the Budget Committee. According to officials of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), the effect of a discharge petition can be significant. That was evident last year when Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA) introduced his in support of H.R. 303. Although it didn't receive the required 218 votes, it was enough to put pressure on the administration to support a partial fix for concurrent receipt. [Source: AF Retiree News Release No. 04-03-04 6 APR 04]

TFL WPS NEW CONTRACT: All beneficiaries who are eligible for TRICARE For Life (TFL), including those under age 65 and dual-eligible for TRICARE and Medicare, will soon receive a letter from the new TFL claims processor Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS). Beginning 1 APR 04, WPS will be phased in as the new centralized claims processor for all TRICARE regions and the approximately 1.7 million TFL beneficiaries in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the American Samoan Islands and the North Mariana Islands. The introductory letter contains contact information and frequently asked questions on TFL, WPS, and the automated claims processing system that services all TFL beneficiaries. The new contract integrates the services previously provided by each of the regional managed care support contractors, providing a single source for claims processing, customer service and administrative claims services. The WPS TRICARE For Life (WPS TFL) contract is part of the DoD's next generation of contracts and is designed to optimize the delivery of claims and associated customer services. TFL claims processing is currently in a state of transition. The outgoing regional claims processor will continue to process claims for services beneficiaries receive until WPS TFL is implemented in the beneficiary's state. For information about current claims processors and to find out what region a beneficiary is in, see www.tricare.osd.mil/main/chart.html. WPS TFL is being phased in as follows:

Region 11: April 1, 2004
 Regions 2/5: June 1, 2004
 Regions 9/10/12: July 1, 2004
 Regions 3/4: August 1, 2004
 Region 1: September 1, 2004
 Regions 7/8 (Central): October 1, 2004
 Region 6: November 1, 2004

Because the Medicare program is administered on a state-by-state basis, WPS TFL will be implemented by state. In cases when parts of a state are included under two separate regions, WPS TFL will be implemented when the largest part of a

state is scheduled to be implemented. For example, Idaho falls under Region 7/8 (Central) and Northern Idaho falls under Region 11; all of Idaho will be phased in with Region 7/8 (Central). A complete list of phase in dates by state will soon be available on www.tricare.osd.mil. On the above implementation dates, beneficiaries who are under age 65 and are eligible for both Medicare and TRICARE due to disability or end-stage renal disease will no longer need to directly file claims to a managed care support contractor. All claims filed with Medicare for these dual-eligible beneficiaries will go to WPS TFL. Each Medicare carrier has agreements with WPS that allow Medicare to directly submit claims to WPS TFL once implemented in the state. If the provider currently submits claims electronically on the beneficiary's behalf to Medicare, Medicare will now submit this claim directly to WPS TFL. Beneficiaries will receive an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from WPS TFL once processing has been completed. Once implemented in a region, beneficiaries may call WPS TFL at (866) 773-0404 or TDD (866) 773-0405 for information and/or claims processing assistance. For more information, go to www.tricare.osd.mil/faqs/default.aspx; under "Word Search" type in "TRICARE For Life" or under the "Advanced Search" use the drop down menu, and choose category "TRICARE For Life/Dual eligible", subcategory "All" and then hit "GO". Beneficiaries may also access TRICARE For Life information on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/tfl and on the WPS Web site at www.tricare4u.com. [Source: Tricare News Release No. 04-09 dtd 7 APR 04]

Legislation of Interest UPDATE 01: Following is a list of legislation of interest as of APR 04 as compiled by TREA. If any of these bills affect you and you would like to see them passed into law you are encouraged to contact your congressional representatives and express your concern if they are not a cosponsor of the bill. More detailed information on these and other legislation as well as a information as to who is for and against certain bills are available at www.trea.org:

S. 451 (Olympia Snowe (R-ME) Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2003: to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older, to provide for a one-year open season under that plan. There are 45 co-sponsors.

S. 1000 (Graham, R-SC), National Guard and Reserves Reform Act for the 21st Century: To amend title 10, United States Code, to revise the age and service requirements for eligibility to receive retired pay for non-regular service; to provide TRICARE eligibility for members of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve and their families; to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax with respect to employees who participate in the military reserve components and to allow a

comparable credit for participating reserve component self-employed individuals. There are currently 14 co-sponsors

S 1916 (Landrieu, D-LA) Military Survivor Benefits Act of 2003. This bill would eliminate the current age 62 annuity reduction -- from 55 percent to 35 percent -- phased in over a 10-year period beginning in October, 2005. There are 17 co-sponsors.

H.R. 742, to amend title 10, United States Code, to reduce the age for receipt of military retired pay for non-regular service (Reserve Components) from 60 to 55. Introduced by Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ) on 2/12/03. There are currently 170 co-sponsors. A companion bill, S. 1035 was introduced in the Senate by Jon Corzine (D-NJ). This bill has 11 co-sponsors.

H.R. 1111 (Cass Ballenger, R-NC) Uniformed Services Divorce Equity Act of 2003: To amend title 10, United States Code, to revise the rules relating to the court-ordered apportionment of the retired pay of members of the uniformed services to former spouses. There are currently 21 co-sponsors.

H.R. 1653 (Jim Saxton, R-NJ) to amend title 10, United States Code, to change the effective date for paid-up coverage under the military Survivor Benefit Plan from October 1, 2008, to October 1, 2003. Currently there are 43 co-sponsors. A companion bill, S 2177 was introduced by Sen. Jon Corzine (D-NJ) on 3/9/04. There are currently no co-sponsors.

H.R. 1726 (Henry Brown, R-SC) Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the offset from surviving spouse annuities under the military Survivor Benefit Plan for amounts paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as dependency and indemnity compensation. There are 45 co-sponsors.

H.R. 3474 (Van Hollen, D-MD) Keep Our Promises to America's Military Retirees Act, to restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services. There are 200 co-sponsors.

H.R. 3763 (Miller, R-FL) Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. The measure would eliminate the current age 62 annuity reduction -- from 55 percent to 35 percent -- phased in over a 10-year period, and provide an open enrollment period, beginning in October, 2005. There are currently 294 co-sponsors. H.R. 548, introduced by Mr. Miller in 2003, has 301 co-sponsors.

H.R. 4065 (Brown-Waite, R-FL) Veterans Housing Affordability Act of 2004; To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum amount of home loan guaranty available to a veteran, and to provide for annual adjustments to such amount. Introduced on 3/30/04. [Source: AF Retiree News Release No. 04-03-04 6 APR 04]

BRAC 2005 UPDATE 01: Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) National Executive Secretary recently submitted testimony to

the House Appropriations' Subcommittee on Military Construction expressing the Association's concerns over Department of Defense (DoD) proposals to close some or all DoD-sponsored schools on military installations; institute Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) policies insensitive to affected military communities; and the Department's efforts to cut or compromise other quality-of-life programs that are of great value to military families. DoD's proposed BRAC policies do nothing to protect the interests of the military community surrounding military installations. The Association recently sent a recommendation to DoD concerning the BRAC selection criteria as published in the Federal Register. It urged the commission to take into account the economic impact on the local community, particularly that affecting members, family members, and survivors of the military components, active, reserve, and retired. DOD's response left little encouragement that BRAC will place the needs of the military community residing in the vicinity over the military's overall value or the impact on the civilian community. [FRA Public Relations msg.dtd 4 APR 04 prfra@fra.org]

BRAC is a very sensitive issue to the retired community since loss of a local base impacts on the availability of benefits. All bases are required to make inputs via their chain of command in accordance with the criteria outlined in the various directives listed at www.defenselink.mil/brac. Just because they appear on a list prepared in advance of the SECDEF 16 May annual report to congress does not mean they will be included in his recommendations for closure that year. In other words, any list published prior to 16 May is either speculation or an educated guess since all inputs have to be reviewed by SECDEF's staff in order to make a valid decision.

Death Notification Procedure for Retirees:

Upon the death of a uniformed service retiree, the next of kin should call the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), Cleveland Center. DFAS will close the retiree's pay account and send a survivor benefits package. Typically, forms will be included that instruct the next of kin on how to recoup the retiree's unpaid pay and how to initiate SBP payments if applicable. You must fill these out promptly and return them with a certified copy of the death certificate. Survivors should report retiree deaths to the DFAS Cleveland Center's casualty office at 1-800-269-5170. Faxes can be sent to the office at 1-800-469-6559.

Provide the following data in your notification:

- Retiree's full name
- Retiree's Social Security Number
- Retiree's date of death
- Beneficiary name and relationship to deceased
- Retiree's current address

Additional actions to take are:

- o Notify Social Security Administration and apply for \$255 death benefit.
- o Return and cancel any pension payments received after the date of death. However, Do not return any retired payments that have been directly deposited to a bank account; DFAS will automatically reclaim the money that needs to be returned when you notify DFAS of the retiree's death.
- o Obtain a list of benefits applicable to the retiree's beneficiaries that they are entitled to.
- o Notify the Local County Veteran's Service Office or Veterans Administration Regional Office and request their assistance for obtaining burial benefits.
- o Apply for a new ID card for the spouse.
- o Do not use any retirement, VA or Social Security payments issued after the date of death. A beneficiary can be required to pay any money back that was used after the date of death.

Medal Request via Internet:

Army veterans and their families can have an easier time tracking and receiving medals and decorations thanks to an automated system used by the Clothing and Heraldry Product Support Integration Directorate (PSID). The Web-based system eliminates extensive paperwork, reduces processing time and has capabilities such as allowing each veteran the opportunity to find out the status of his or her request or make address changes online. These types of inquiries that used to be handled telephonically or by letter can be entered online at <http://veteranmedals.army.mil/>. Award criteria and background for the different service medals can also be found on the Website. Requests for medals are initiated through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. Eligible veterans or the next-of-kin of a deceased veteran can request medals from NPRC at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/> [Source: Psychological Operations Veterans Association VSO Msg. 16 MAR 04]

Awards Rackbuilder:

The below website builds your awards "rack" for your uniform. You check which ribbons you have, and it produces the order of precedence.

<http://www.armyawards.com/awards.shtml>

Nonprofit Group To Build Homes for Disabled Troops:

John Gonsalves, a construction supervisor from Wareham, Mass., says he was struck by television news accounts of a Humvee driver in Iraq who lost two legs during a rocket-

propelled grenade attack. "I remember watching that and wondering, 'What happens to him from here'?" Gonsalves said. The news story inspired him to volunteer his services to an organization that builds houses for disabled troops -- but he couldn't find one. "That planted the seed for Homes for Our Troops," he said. "I knew that if I didn't get a group together and try to do this, it would haunt me the rest of my life." With more than \$100,000 in donations and \$50,000 in labor and building materials, Gonsalves hopes to break ground soon on his first project.

To make a donation, visit <http://www.homesforourtroops.org> or write: Homes for Our Troops, Inc., P.O. Box 615, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532.

Shingles:

If you had the chickenpox as a child and are now over 60 you are in the group most likely to get shingles. This is a miserable painful skin and nerve infection caused by a reactivation of the chickenpox virus. Each year more than 800,000 Americans develop shingles, also known as herpes zoster. About half of those who live to 85 will get the disease that had chickenpox as a child. When a young person recovers from chickenpox the varicella zoster virus continues to remain in clusters of nerve cells next to the spinal cord. The immune system causes the virus to lay dormant for many years but as we age the immune system weakens allowing the virus to reactivate. Factors other than age that can heighten the risk of reactivation are those that compromise the immune system. AIDS, Hodgkin's disease, intact of drugs that suppress the immune system, and stress can play a role in triggering the disease.

Contact with an infected person does not cause another person's dormant virus to reawaken. However, the virus from a shingles patient may cause chickenpox in someone who has not had the disease before. When the virus reawakens it travels through the nerves to the skin. The first symptoms can be flu-like such as fever, chills, headache, nausea, or upset stomach. Some people experience itchiness, a tingling feeling, or pain in the initial stage. Within a few days, a painful rash develops usually on the chest, back or face. When the rash is at its peak it can be intense and unrelenting. This rash develops into small, fluid filled blisters that begin to dry out and crust over after about a week. For most people the disease will resolve without treatment and after one attack the condition is unlikely to return. If treatment is provided with antiviral drugs within the first couple of days it can reduce the pain and may help prevent a shingles complication known as postherpetic neuralgia. This condition results from damaged nerves and can continue long after the rash heals. While not life threatening it can develop into chronic pain that may bring with it insomnia, weight loss, depression, and other medical problems. Fortunately, only about 10% of all people with shingles develop postherpetic neuralgia and in most cases the pain is not severe and goes away within a couple of months. If shingles appear on the face it can lead to vision or

hearing problems. If the cornea becomes infected the result can cause permanent blindness.

Researchers are testing a more potent version of the chickenpox vaccine given to children to see if it can prevent the occurrence of shingles. The study has recruited some 37,000 volunteers at 21 VA medical centers nationwide. Results from the clinical trial are expected within a year or two. The VA researcher coordinating the study has reported that seniors who regularly performed a Chinese style of exercise called "tai chi" for 15 weeks boosted their immunity to shingles. [Source: Living Well article in AL Magazine FEB 04]

VA Gravesite Locator:

Records showing where veterans and their spouses have been buried in Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries are now available online at www.cem.va.gov making it easy for anyone with Internet access to search for the gravesite locations of deceased family members and friends. The nationwide grave locator contains more than three million records of veterans and dependents buried in VA's 120 cemeteries since the Civil War. It also has records of some burials in state veterans' cemeteries and burials in Arlington National Cemetery from 1999 to the present. The records date to the establishment of the first national cemeteries during the Civil War. The Web site is updated nightly with information on burials the previous day. The site displays the same information that visitors to national cemeteries find on kiosks or in written ledgers to locate gravesites: name, dates of birth and death, period of military service, branch of service and rank if known, the cemetery's location and phone number, plus the grave's precise location in the cemetery. Refer to the home page Burial and Memorial Benefits to select the Nationwide Gravesite Locator to begin a search. State cemetery burial records are from those cemeteries that use VA's database to order government headstones and markers for veterans' graves. Since 1999, Arlington National Cemetery, operated by the Department of Army, has used that database. The information in the database comes from records of interment, which before 1994 were paper records, kept at each cemetery. VA's interment records contain more information than what is shown on the Internet and cemetery kiosks. Some information, such as identification of the next of kin, will not be shown to the public for privacy reasons. Immediate family members with a government identification card may request to see the full record of a burial when they visit a national cemetery. Six cemeteries which have not yet completed their records for inclusion in the data base are Long Island, Los Angeles, Ft. Rosecrans, Golden Gate, San Francisco, and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. [Source: VA News Release No. 04-19-04 & AF News dtd 23 APR 04]

****TRIVIA QUESTIONS****

How many of you remember the tough, but compassionate prison guard Bull Ransom in the 1962 classic "The Birdman of Alcatraz"? What about Duke, the barely restrained prisoner of war in "Stalag 17"? Well, Ransom, Duke, and dozens of other characters, shared the same craggy face and gravelly voice of one man an "actor's actor" and real life World War II hero.

(Answer on page 17)

****FEEDBACK****

This is your newsletter, and if you would like to have something noted please get back to me at 626-4380 or e-mail me Dean.Soule@me.ngb.army.mil

****Retiree E-Mail Addresses****



Listed below are e-mail addresses of some of our retirees. This is a way of keeping in touch, providing upcoming events and news of interest between regular issues of the newsletters. If you would like to have your e-mail address included in this list, e-mail me at Dean.Soule@me.ngb.army.mil

If you change your e-mail address you will need to provide me with the change. An incorrect e-mail address can affect my distribution group for sending out e-mails. One bad address can affect the entire group. This is also a way of keeping you informed of deaths, legislative issues, family support, etc.

The following are name of e-mails that were provided to me by the individual that have since come up as incorrect e-mails. If you still want to have your e-mail address in my distribution box for any updates and or listed in the newsletter please contact me with the correct e-mail address:

- CW3 Kenneth Burr
- SSG Vivian Fuller
- SFC Eric Johnson
- CW4 Jim Keene
- SGM Bill Keller
- MAJ Dave Sowers

Adams, Earl, MG – adams_earl@msn.com
 Amoroso, Francis (Frank) J, COL – colonelandbetty@nlis.net
 Atkins Ernest D. Jr, SGM. - MILRETSGM@aol.com
 Azzarello, Leonard S., SSG - the_chip3@maine.rr.com
 Barron, Mike, SSG - ma1fcs@hotmail.com
 Barry, Bruce M., LTC – barrybm@msn.com
 Beaulé, Donald, SFC – gnfshng437@aol.com
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Correct Mailing Address



If anyone knows the correct mailing address for the these retirees, please contact a member of the Retiree Council or myself at:

- Phone: (207) 626-4380
- Mail: Dept. of Def., Vet. & Emerg. Mgmt.
33 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0033
- E-Mail: Dean.Soule@me.ngb.army.mil

This will help keep the cost of mailing down and ensuring a retiree is getting his or her newsletter. The newsletters are mailed out by bulk mailing and not first class, which means if an incorrect mailing address is on the newsletter, it will not be returned as in most cases with first class mailing. We really have no way of knowing if the mailing address is correct.



The intent of the Retiree Council and the Retiree Newsletter is to keep the retirees informed and maintain comradery. We are now up to 1,234 members strong.

Dean A. Soule

****RETIREE COUNCIL MEMBERS****

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Albert White, Jr. | Chairman |
| Robert Weymouth | Vice Chairman |
| Dean Soule | Secretary/Editor of Retiree Newsletter |
| James Laflin | Chairman Retiree List |
| | Martin Asdourian |
| | David Blair |
| | Jeanne Clements |
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| | Dick Duffy |
| | Nathan Grass |
| | Clifton Johnson |
| | Donald Laflin |
| | Mac McClintock |
| | Gautrey Musk |
| | Stanley Sargent |
| | Romain Savoie |
| | David Shorey |
| | Douglas Welsh, Jr. |

A word from our Chairman:

Hi you all,

As you all know I am chairman of the MeARNG retiree council and I am on the Board of Directors of the Maine Military Historical Society. I am recruiting for both the retiree council and the Board.

The council meets every other month from 0900-1000 hours in the Tag conference room at Camp Keyes. We are briefed on what is new in the Maine Guard and on issues that concern retirees. Of course we publish the news too. I say we, but really Dean Soule is the Man. The council has about 12 members but we sure could use several more. Not all members make every meeting. Dress is casual. Please

consider attending a meeting. They are scheduled for April 13, June 15, August 17, October 19, and December 14.

The MMHS Board meets at 1700 hours in the Tag conference room every other month.

The Board runs/maintains the MMHS Museum at Camp Keyes. It is the only pure military museum in Maine. We have several board members that give tours to all kinds of groups, like veterans, schools, ROTC, Legislators, and anybody who has an interest in the military history of Maine and her veterans. Our annual meeting is held in October during which we honor a segment of our military. This event you do not want to miss. It is filled with a lot of Red, White and Blue. I invite you to check us out at one of our meetings they are scheduled for March 10, May 19, July 14, September 22, October 23, (Annual meeting), and November 17. For more information contact our current president Colonel Retired Don Lajoie at 207-626-4220. As an added note we have board members from all the services not just the Maine National Guard.

Hope this finds you all in good health.

God Bless America

Al White
442-8734

****ANSWERS TO TRIVIA****

NEVILLE BRAND

Setting the Record Straight



One of seven children, Neville Brand was born to Leo and Helen Brand on August 13th, 1920, in Griswold, Iowa. At the age of seven, he and his family moved to Kewanee, Illinois, where he grew up, graduated from high school, and entered the Illinois National Guard on October 23rd, 1939, as a private with Company F, 129th Infantry. A year-and-a-half later, Corporal

Brand was inducted into Federal service with the 129th, and assigned Army Serial Number.

After five weeks of infantry training, and an unsuccessful attempt at Officers Candidate School, the twenty-four-year-old former shoe salesman departed for the European Theater of Operations on December 9th, 1944, and arrived there on December 16th. Relatively little is known of his nine months and nineteen days overseas, but his official military records reflect that Neville Brand participated in the Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central European campaigns, and received the

Silver star while convalescing at the 21st General Hospital for gallantry in combat. His other awards and decorations are the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Service Ribbon, the European/African/Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with three Battle Stars, one Overseas Service Bar, one Service Stripe, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. In a rare 1966 interview in which he consented to speak of his wartime service, Brand recalled how he earned his Silver Star when his unit came under intense fire from German machine guns located within a hunting lodge. "I must have flipped my lid," he said, for "I decided to go into that lodge." Disregarding his own safety, he worked his way around to the rear of the lodge/command post, burst in through the back and single-handedly dispatched the enemy within.

Later, on April 7th, 1945, exactly one month and a day before the official German surrender, Sergeant Brand was wounded in action by the Weser River. Felled by a gunshot to his upper right arm, and pinned down by withering enemy ground fire, Brand lay there slowly bleeding to death. "I knew I was dying," he said, "It was a lovely feeling, like being half-loaded". Rescued and treated, Brand was evacuated to a military hospital and, on September 17th, 1945, he departed for the United States. Less than a month later, Staff Sergeant Brand was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army at Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

After his discharge, Neville Brand studied acting under the G.I. Bill, and appeared in his first film as a sadistic hoodlum opposite Edmond O'Brien in the 1950 production of "D.O.A." Over the next thirty-five years, Neville Brand consistently delivered outstanding performances on the stage, television and film, winning the prestigious Sylvania Award in 1958 for his performance in "All the King's Men." Having performed with Mr. Brand in a 1964 episode of the television show *Combat!* Mr. Richard Peabody (who played the part of "Littlejohn") recalled that, "He was sort of an actor's actor...his peers respected his work a great deal". Moreover, "He was one of the nicer guests we had on the show; extremely friendly, and very well liked by both the cast and the crew".

One of Neville Brand's passions was reading. Having once visited Mr. Brand's home in Malibu, co-star Richard Peabody remembers, "I saw all these book cases — I couldn't believe it, I've never seen such an array of books in anybody's private home in my life -- it looked like a library ... I was amazed about what an avid reader he was. You look at the titles, and his tastes were really eclectic — he was interested in everything".

Neville Brand's home was destroyed by fire, and most of his personal mementoes (and cherished books) were lost. Some years later, reclusive and enduring a protracted struggle with emphysema, Neville Brand passed away on April 16th, 1992, at Sutter General Hospital in Sacramento, California. His ashes are interred at East Lawn Memorial Park, Sacramento,

California, in a vessel shaped like a book, with his name engraved on the spine.

