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MEARNG RETIREE NEWSLETTER



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

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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.**

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.

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

"Gray Area" Retirees

Effective February 1, 2005, the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) will waive the 12-month waiting period for major services (Crowns, Bridges, Partials and Orthodontics) for all traditional Guard/Reserve retirees (and their family members) who enroll within 120 days after their retirement date. This provision used to only apply to those who retired from active duty.

This new waiver will also be applied retroactively to February 1, 2004 for all dental claims that qualify for this new benefit. The "Gray Area" enrollee will have to submit documentation that shows he/she enrolled in the TRDP within 120 days after their 2004 retirement date.

COMMENTARY This is the twenty-eighth 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

NOTE:

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

The following is a press release.

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program sweetens benefit for members of the National Guard/Reserve

TMA grants waiver of 12-month waiting period for full scope of services

Sacramento – National Guard and Reserve personnel who elect to enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) within 120 days after retirement are now eligible to skip the 12-month waiting period normally required for certain TRDP benefits, according to Delta Dental, the program's administrator.

Effective February 1, 2005, TMA authorized a waiver from requiring retired National Guard/Reserve men and women who meet the criteria to be enrolled in the TRDP for 12 months prior to gaining the maximum allowed benefits for cast crowns, cast restorations, bridges, dentures and orthodontics for both adults and children.

Additionally, this new waiver will be applied retroactively to February 1, 2004 for any Guard and Reserve enrollees who can document their enrollment in the TRDP within 120 days after their retirement effective date. Delta will process any claim adjustments resulting from this retroactive waiver, upon notification from the enrollee and submission of the appropriate documentation.

All new enrollees seeking to obtain the waiver should submit a copy of their retirement orders together with their application.

The nation's largest voluntary, all-enrollee-paid dental program continues to offer coverage for diagnostic and preventive services, basic restorative services, periodontics, endodontics, oral surgery, dental emergencies and a separate dental accident benefit with no waiting period. The program currently covers over 800,000 retired members of the uniformed services, including National Guard and Reserve personnel, and their families.

"We are working in partnership with TMA to offer a comprehensive dental program with the fewest possible restrictions in the first year of enrollment," said Lowell Daun, DDS, senior vice president for Delta's Federal Services division. "We are also working to keep premiums affordable for members of the National Guard/Reserve."

Eligibility for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program extends to all retirees of the Reserve and Guard and their family members, including "gray area" retired Reservists who are entitled to retired pay but will not begin receiving it until age 60. Although eligibility for this group has been in effect since the TRDP first began in 1998, many retired Reserve and Guard members, and even more "gray area" retirees, still do not realize they are eligible. It is important to note that as with

all new retirees, the 120-day period during which a "gray area" retired Reservist can enroll in the TRDP to qualify for the 12-month waiting period waiver begins with his/her retirement effective date, not the date he/she reaches age 60.

The TRDP, first authorized by Congress in 1997, continues today to offer one of the few affordable, comprehensive dental benefit programs available to the nation's Uniformed Services retirees, as well as to retirees of the Reserve and Guard. The TRDP is a nationwide, combined fee-for-service/preferred provider program that offers enrollees access to any licensed dentist in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Canada.

Enrollees may seek care from any licensed dentist, with optimal benefits available when choosing a participating "Delta Dental PPO" dentist in over 80,000 locations nationwide.

The TRDP carries a \$50 per person annual deductible. The program also includes a family deductible cap of \$150 and an annual maximum amount of \$1,200, against which preventive and diagnostic services are not counted. In addition to the annual maximum, the TRDP also has a separate dental accident annual maximum of \$1,000 and a lifetime orthodontic maximum of \$1,200.

Eligible retirees and their family members can find answers to their questions about the program as well as enroll using Delta's dedicated TRDP web site at www.trdp.org or by calling the toll-free number at 1-866-567-1658.

Delta Dental of California belongs to a larger holding company system, formed jointly with Delta Dental of Pennsylvania and several affiliate companies, covering nearly 21 million enrollees in 16 states and the District of Columbia. Both the California and Pennsylvania Delta Plans are members of the national Delta Dental Plans Association, which collectively covers 43 million Americans.

Bill Would Prevent Individual Premium Hikes

House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman Steve Buyer, R-Ind., has introduced HR-2046, which would prohibit individual health insurance premium increases for Guard and Reserve members upon reinstatement of their insurance when they are released from active duty. Frequently, members of the Reserve Components drop their health insurance coverage when mobilized because they and their families become eligible for the Tricare health care system. Under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), a service member ordered to active duty who terminates health insurance coverage is entitled to reinstatement of coverage after returning to civilian life, but the SCRA does not expressly protect the member against a premium increase upon

reinstatement. The bill would prohibit a premium increase upon reinstatement if it affects only the individual service member but it would allow general increases in premiums if they apply to other persons with similar coverage.

Now: Web-based Pharmacy Search Tool

Tricare's new pharmacy Formulary Search Tool allows beneficiaries to find medication-specific information using either a drug name or a medical condition. The FST also shows drug availability through the Tricare Mail Order or Retail Pharmacy programs, and lists medications that are on the Basic Core Formulary. It includes copayment information for prescription drugs, including injectable medications. It also displays generic equivalents for brand-name medications, and quantity limits or prior authorization requirements. In addition, visitors to the site can view and print prior authorization criteria and forms. Furthermore, they can learn about FDA approved drug uses, side effects and potential interactions with other medications. For more information on the Tricare Pharmacy Program, visit the Tricare Pharmacy home page at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy. The search tool is accessible directly at www.tricareformularysearch.org.

Two Drugs Targeted for Non-Formulary Status

The Defense Department's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (P&T Committee) has recommended that a heart medication, Teveten, and a drug used to treat acid reflux and peptic ulcers, Nexium, be moved to non-formulary status. If the drugs become non-formulary, they can't be dispensed at a military pharmacy unless the prescribing physician proves medical necessity. They would, however, remain available through the Tricare retail network and the Tricare Mail Order Program at a higher co-payment of \$22, again unless medical necessity is cited. The P&T Committee is charged to identify drugs that are more expensive than other drugs with the same clinical effectiveness, and recommend them for non-formulary status. The committee's recommendations will be reviewed by the Beneficiary Advisory Panel. The BAP will forward its comments to Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, who will make the final decision.

Attention All Current and Former Civilian Federal Employees:

Were you a Civilian Federal Employee in the National Guard or the Reserves between 1980 and the year 2000?

Did you attend training for the Reserves or the National Guard while working as a Civilian Federal Employee?

Were you charged Military Leave for non-work days while you were in training?

If you answered "Yes" to all questions, you can file a claim to correct your military/annual leave records and/or receive back pay for any Leave Without Pay (LWP) that you were forced to use.

For more information log on to www.afge.org/Militaryleave

This applies to Army and Air Guard members who worked for Federal Agencies such as Post Office, IRS, Department of Agriculture, etc. who performed 15 consecutive days of annual training during the time period indicated and were charged Military Leave for weekends.

A provision in the US Code (10 USC 112731b) which states that a Reservist/Guardsman with 15, but less than 20 years of satisfactory service, who is physically disqualified for continued service due to accident/injury incurred in non military related status can be transferred to the Retired Reserve and will receive an age 60 retirement annuity based on his/her grade and retirement points earned to the date of disqualification.

If anyone knows of an individual separated for non duty related physical disqualification since 5 October 1994, they should be advised to apply for a Correction of Military Records and to be transferred to the Retired Reserve rather than having been discharged.

SBP Update

The FY 2005 National Defense Authorization Act eliminates the Survivor Benefit Plan ³Widow's Tax². This was one of NGAUS' legislative priorities and we are pleased the Congress saw fit to correct this inequity.

Under SBP, a retiree pays a premium so that the surviving spouse can collect 55% of the retiree's pension after the retiree dies. The 55% amount was reduced to 35 % when the surviving spouse turned 62 and collected Social Security.

Under the new law, the Social Security offset is phased out starting in 2005. Here is the phase out schedule:

- From September 2005 through March 2006 the spouse will receive 40 percent
- From April 2006 through March 2007 the spouse will receive 45 percent
- From April 2007 through March 2008 the spouse will receive 50 percent
- From April 2008 on the spouse will receive 55 percent of the retiree's pension

Many retirees opted not to buy into the SBP because of the Social Security offset. Therefore, the Congress has authorized an ³open season² for retirees who may now want to buy into SBP. The open enrollment period begins October 1, 2005 and lasts for one year only. Premiums will be based on

a formula that includes the total amount of premiums that would have been paid had the retiree initially enrolled, plus interest, plus any other reasonable additional fees deemed necessary by the Secretary of Defense.

Since this is a major change to the Survivor Benefit Plan, each individual is likely to have questions about his or her specific circumstance. According to the SBP expert at HQ Army, DoD has not yet issued any guidance on implementation of the changes and officials anticipate it will be Spring before details are sent out. Members are encouraged to periodically check the Army's webpage at www.Armyg1.army.mil <<http://www.Armyg1.army.mil>> and click on retirement services. Because this is a DoD program, information will be consistent across the services.

Army Retirement Services Survivor Benefit Plan

Without SBP, retired pay stops with the death of the retiree.

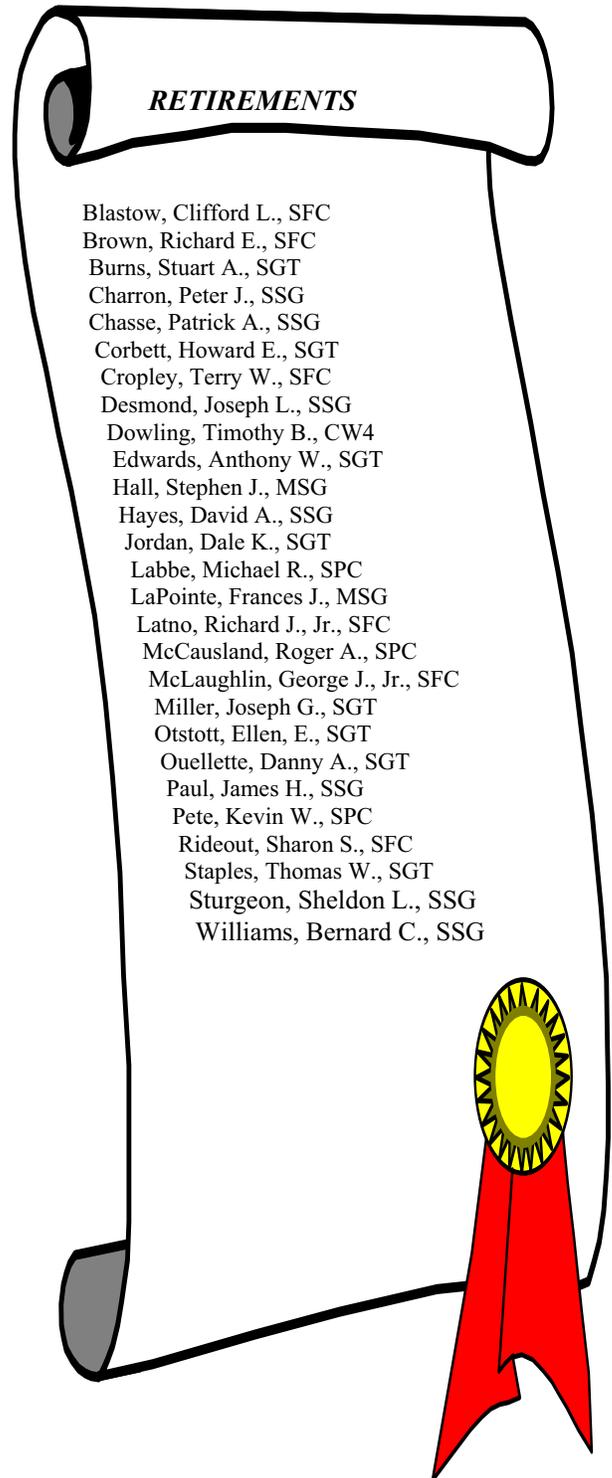
SBP was established by PL 92-425, 21 Sept 1972, so that retiring Soldiers could elect to provide the continuation of a portion of retired pay to their designated beneficiary(ies). Retirees pay for SBP coverage with a percentage of their retired pay. The SBP payment is deducted from retired pay before the retired pay is taxed – it's a tax-free payment.

SBP changes retired pay from a “single-life payout” to a “joint and survivor payout”. A single-life payout lasts only for the lifetime of the retiree. While this maximizes the monthly income for the retiree, it eliminates benefits for the surviving spouse. A joint and survivor payout stretches retired pay over the lifetime of the retiree and the spouse. Monthly payments are reduced, but they are guaranteed to last over the lifetimes of two people.

The original Congressional intent was that SBP:

- Would be a two-tiered system (Note: the FY05 National Defense Authorization Act phases in elimination of the second, reduced benefit tier from Oct 05 to Apr 08).
- Would be cost-shared between the government and the retiree on a 40/60 basis.
- Would ensure that any surviving spouse of a retiree who elects SBP would never be without a monthly income.

****TRANSITIONS****



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



****TAPS****

SFC (Ret) Norman L. Lachapelle

SGT (Ret) Raymond Doody Jr.

MSG (Ret) Talmadge E. Allen

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



We will never forget

Members of the 133rd Engineer Bn Who Risked Their Lives To Save Ours

l to r: 1SG Michael Jones; SGT Christopher Gelineau; SGT Thomas Dostie; SSG Lynn Poulin, Sr.



Volunteers Welcome In Helping To Conduct Military Funeral Honors:

The POC for this is:

Mr. Frank R. Norwood

MSG, Retired

Military Funeral Honors

Contract Coordinator

(207) 626-7822

Cell: (703) 901-8531

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 military funeral honors

can perform honors to standard. The training and certification

are done at a location to be determined by the needs of the

organization. The training takes just a 2 -3 hours depending

on the individuals. After the standard of training is met, a

certificate and Military 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>



Advance Warning

With "advance directives," you can provide directions for

your own medical care, in advance of a time when such

instructions are necessary. Advance directives include:

- Living wills.
 - With such a document, doctors and hospitals can be instructed whether or not life-sustaining procedures are desired.
- Health care proxies.
 - Also known as a "health care power of attorney," this document names a person (an "agent") to act on behalf of someone else (the "principal"), if the principal is unable to make medical decisions and there is a choice between

two possible treatments. Language in this proxy should specifically authorize the release of your medical information to your appointed agent. Otherwise, federal law might limit such release, making it difficult for your agent to make informed decisions.

- Organ and tissue donation affidavit
 - If you wish, you can give permission for your organs and other parts of your body to be removed after death for transplants or for experimental purposes.

****MISCELLANEOUS****



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.

Maine Military Museum

The Maine Military Historical Society runs the only pure military museum in Maine, located at Camp Keyes.

The Society depends on donations and dues for financial support. We are now working on receiving grants and have received two to help maintain and improve the museum.

We are in desperate need of a program for our computer called PAST PERFECT. It is used by almost all museums to catalogue artefacts etc. The program costs close to \$900.00 when all is said and done. We have had some donations so far but need your help to reach our goal. Therefore if you can see it in your heart please send a check payable to the MMHS at the bottom of check indicate for past perfect. Even a check for 4 or 5 dollars would really help. We are non-profit so your donations are tax deductible.

Many thanks in advance!!!!

ALBERT J WHITE JR
 Brigadier General MeNG Retired
 ajwhite@gwi.net
 529 Fosters Point Road
 West Bath, Maine 04530
 207-442-8734
 Board Member

At official functions, social events, and sporting events, soldiers should—

When in civilian attire, stand at attention, face the flag with the right hand over the heart and **recite the Pledge of Allegiance**. Headgear should be removed with the right hand and held over the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.

The Army song

“The Army Goes Rolling Along” is the official song of the U.S. Army. The Army song concludes all reviews, parades and honor guard ceremonies. Individuals will stand at attention and sing the lyrics of the Army song when the Army song is played. Individuals will stand at attention during the playing of official songs of other Services. For the lyrics to the Army song, visit The Army Bands’ Web site at <http://www.bands.army.mil>.

****UPCOMING EVENTS****

MeARNG Retiree Council Meeting Dates for 2005:

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 15 2005	Tuesday
April 12 2005	Tuesday
June 14 2005	Tuesday
August 16 2005	Tuesday
October 18 2005	Tuesday
December 13 2005	Tuesday

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

Maine Army Retiree Council Meetings – Calendar Year 2005:

(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:

- 08 Apr 05, 1930 hrs, Air National Guard Base, 514 Mainiac Ave., Bangor, Me 04401
- 10 Jun 05, 1930 hrs, Post #31 American Legion Post, Washington St., Auburn, Me 04210
- 11 Aug 05, 1930 hrs, Maine Veterans Home, Scarborough, Me 04074
- 14 Oct 05, 1930 hrs, Post #40, American Legion Post, Winthrop, Me 04364

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

- LTC William Allenack, USA (Ret) 998-3518, PO Box 52, West Poland, Me 04291
- CSM Edward L. Davis, AUS (Ret) (207) 469-7918, PO Box 50, East Orland, Me 04431
- CSM Estol R. "Mac" McClintock, USA (Ret), (207) 683-6121, 59 Huff Corner road, Wellington, Me 04942-8709
- SFC Harold L. Ware, AUS (Ret) (207) 642-2757, 110 Fort hill Road, Standish, Me 04084

Welcome Home Ceremony for the 133rd Eng Bn:

Another event you should not miss: On Sunday 24 July the welcome home ceremony of the 133rd Engr Bn at the Augusta Civic Center time to be announced. Plan to attend this and bring all of your friends and neighbors.

'Retiree Activity Day 2005'

- **Where:** Brunswick Naval Air Station
- **When:** Saturday – 13 August 2005
- **Host:** Retired Activity Office at BNAS
- **Valuable Information:**
 - **Formal Presentations on:**
 - **TRICARE for Life**
 - **DELTA Dental**
 - **MEDICARE**
 - **Long Term Care**
 - **Martins Point**
 - **Information tables on many things that military retirees care about**
- **Who Should Go:** Military Retirees & Spouses
- **Expect:** Specials at the NASB BX and Commissary

More information to follow in the near future....So please jot down date now and plan on attending.

Al White

Chairman MeARNG Retiree Council

MEARNG Aviation Unit Reunion Plans

As many of you may not know the old ASSF at BIA is undergoing major rework to go along with outstanding hangers already in use for the Blackhawk's. When construction is complete a dedication/ribbon cutting in planned. The old-timers in aviation will be planning a reunion to coincide with this event. The reunion will be for any person who is serving or has served in an aviation unit in the MEARNG to assist the committee in locating former members. Please send e-mail address/home address to the following:

**Albert White, BG
529 Fosters Point Road
West Bath, Me. 04530**

****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.

Unit/Loc	Mission	Per	Location	Status
133 rd Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy)	Operation Iraqi Freedom	3	Maine	Post Deployment Leave
1 st Battalion, 152 nd Field Artillery	Operation Iraqi Freedom	39	Fort Drum, N.Y.	Medical Hold
1 st Battalion, 152 nd FA	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Maine	Post Deployment Leave
Ops. Officer	Operation Enduring Freedom	1	Afghanistan	Deployed

B Co 3-172 nd Infantry BN, Combat Eng	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Baghdad, Iraq	Deployed	Maine Army National Guard Soldiers	Security	13	Camp Keyes; Army Aviation Support Facility/Augusta	On Station
112 th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Bangor	Operations Enduring Freedom	2	Fort Drum, New York	Medical Hold	Co B, 3 rd BT 172 nd Inf Bn 1 st Battalion, 152 nd FA	Operation Enduring Freedom Operation Noble Eagle	5 23	Fort Hood, Texas Fort Sill, Oklahoma	Mob Station On Station
JFHQ Admin NCO	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Kuwait with 42 nd Inf Div., New York National Guard	Deployed	Maine Army National Guard Doctor Maine Army National Guard Doctor	Operation Enduring Freedom Operation Enduring Freedom	1 1	Afghanistan Fort Benning, Georgia	Deployed Mob Station
JFHQ Logistics Officer	Operation Enduring Freedom	1	Mazar E Sharif, Afghanistan	Deployed	Grand Total:		212		
Maine Army National Guard Nurse	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Hanscom AFB, MA	On Station					
152 nd Ord Co (Maint)	Operations Iraqi Freedom Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom	108	Kuwait	Deployed					
52 nd Troop Command	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Kuwait	Deployed	<p><u>U.S. Army announced a new badge for selected combat arms Soldiers:</u></p> <p>Over the past several months, Army Public Affairs has been making a concerted effort to keep your organizations well informed on the latest developments in matters affecting your Army.</p> <p>One such development occurred following the 11 February 2005 Army Four Star Conference, where the Army announced the decision to award a new badge, called the Close Combat Badge, to selected combat arms Soldiers.</p> <p>This decision followed a review of input from commanders in theater as well as from currently serving and retired NCOs and officers, and followed a careful, detailed analysis to determine eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Members of Congress, key Army associates, and other stakeholder audiences are also being notified of this decision.</p> <p>We ask for your assistance in getting the word out to inform your constituency, especially to former Soldiers you know who served in combat after 9/11/2001 and who may be eligible for this award.</p> <p>The news release below, already released to the public, will assist you in disseminating the information accurately. In doing so, you will help us inform all eligible Soldiers – current and former. Thanks!</p>				
JFHQ Mobilization Readiness Officer	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Baghdad, Iraq	Deployed					
B Co. 3-172 nd Infantry BN	Operation Iraqi Freedom	7	Camp Shelby, MS	Scheduled to Depart Maine on 10 Apr 05					
286 th QM BN	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Ft. Irwin, CA	On Station					
1136 th Trans Co.	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Ft. Irwin, CA	On Station					

ARMY ANNOUNCES CLOSE COMBAT BADGE

In response to requests from field commanders and after careful analysis, the U.S. Army announced a new badge for selected combat arms Soldiers in combat arms brigades who engage in active ground combat.

The Close Combat Badge will provide special recognition to ground combat arms Soldiers who are trained and employed in direct combat missions similar to Infantry and Special Forces who will continue to be recognized for their ground-combat role with the Combat Infantryman Badge.

The Army will award the CCB to Armor, Cavalry, Combat Engineer, and Field Artillery Soldiers in Military Occupational Specialties or corresponding officer branch/specialties recognized as having a high probability to routinely engage in direct combat, and they must be assigned or attached to an Army unit of brigade or below, that is purposefully organized to routinely conduct close combat operations and engage in direct combat in accordance with existing rules and policy.

The Army decided on a Close Combat Badge, retroactive to September 11, 2001. It is intended to recognize specific Armor, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Combat Engineer Soldiers, Colonel and below, meeting the above criteria.

Major Generals are the approval authority for the Close Combat Badge.

The Army expects to release in March an administrative message outlining exact rules and regulations. The CCB should be available for purchase in clothing sales stores and through unit supply this fall.

First Medal of Honor flag to be presented

By Eric W Cramer

The new Medal of Honor flag will be presented to the Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith's family. It's field replicates the pattern of stars found on the Medal of Honor.



WASHINGTON (Army News Service, March 29, 2005) -- When Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith's family receives his Medal of Honor, they will receive a new item that will be given to all future recipients of the medal – a Medal of Honor flag.

The flag consists of a field of blue, with 13 stars arranged in the same formation that the stars appear on the Medal of Honor ribbon. It is fringed with gold.

The design was the brainchild of Sarah LeClerc of the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry. A panel of eight members made

of representatives from each Service (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard), one Office of Secretary Defense staff, one historian and one representative from the Medal of Honor Society was formed to review and evaluate all designs submitted and make a final recommendation to the Principal Deputy to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

“Several of us in the Creative Section worked on the design,” LeClerc said. “I wanted to the simplicity of the 13 stars on a blue field.”

LeClerc said her initial design also contained a canton, similar to the canton containing the stars on the U.S. national flag. On her original design, the canton of red and white stripes, contained the word “valor” as it appears on the Medal of Honor. The committee asked if the canton could be removed.

“They felt the design was better without the canton. We said that as it is an Army design, we can change it however you want, and so we removed it,” said Pam Madigan an industrial specialist with the Institute of Heraldry.

A law created in October 2002, called for the creation of the flag, and the institute solicited designs via an announcement in the Federal Registry, Madigan said.

“It didn’t take long for the committee to make a selection. The meeting only lasted four hours, and they asked me if we could remove the canton. They decided to go with Sarah’s ribbon design, with gold fringe,” Madigan said.

For more information on Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith and his Medal of Honor, see



<http://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/>

Citation

Baghdad Airport, April 4, 2003

Bravo Company's view of Highway 8 leading East into Baghdad. The berms were created by combat engineers to impede an enemy attack.



On April 4, 2003, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, attacked to seize Objective Lions, the Baghdad International Airport.

As part of the Brigade scheme of maneuver, Task Force 2-7 Infantry was tasked to establish a blocking position against a brigade-sized counterattack on the main entrance to the airfield. Task Force 2-7 had been fighting for three consecutive days and had moved through the night before reaching the blocking position. Morale was high, but Soldiers were experiencing fatigue. B Company, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment (Knight) was in the east-most position oriented along the main avenue of approach ready for the main enemy counterattack. A Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment (Rage) was attacking to the southeast of the Highway.

The main entrance to the airfield was a four-lane highway with a median to separate incoming and outgoing traffic. Large masonry walls with towers approximately 100 meters apart bound the highway. On the morning of April 4, 2003, more than 100 soldiers from the Task Force 2-7 Forward Aid Station, mortars, scouts and portions of B Company, 11th Engineer Battalion were in the median behind the forward most blocking positions. The B Company, 11th Engineer Battalion 2nd Platoon Leader was on a reconnaissance mission with the B Company, Task Force 2-7 Infantry Commander. During his absence, 2nd Platoon received the mission to construct an Enemy Prisoner of War holding area. Sgt. 1st Class Smith was in charge of 2nd Platoon.

Sgt. 1st Class Smith assessed the best location to be behind the masonry wall bounding the highway. Two guard towers along the wall were ideally situated to provide overwatch to the holding area. An M9 armored combat earthmover (ACE) knocked a hole in the wall to create an opening to a large courtyard with a louvered metal gate on the north side. With the help of a squad

leader and team leader, Sgt. 1st Class Smith checked the far side of the courtyard for enemy, found none, and posted two guards. From the guard post at the gate small



groupings of buildings were 100-200 meters to the northeast. To the northwest, a large white building with a white dome was visible. The location seemed perfect as the courtyard was along the northern flank of the blocking position and enemy actions to this point were mostly from the east.

Sgt. 1st Class Smith's view from his position in the courtyard. Iraqi troops were firing from the tower on the left, and climbing over the wall in front.

While an engineer squad began to clear debris in the courtyard, one of the guards saw 10-15 enemy soldiers with small arms, 60mm mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG). These were the lead elements of an organized company-sized force making a deliberate attack on the flank of Task Force 2-7. Sgt. 1st Class Smith came to the position

and identified 25-50 more soldiers moving into prepared fighting positions. Sgt. 1st Class Smith instructed a squad leader to get a nearby Bradley Fighting Vehicle for support. While waiting for the Bradley, Sgt. 1st Class Smith had members of 2nd platoon retrieve AT-4 weapons and form a skirmish line outside the gate. By this time, the number of enemy identified rose to 100 soldiers, now a confirmed company-sized attack. Three of B Company's M113A3 armored personnel carriers (APC) oriented .50-cal. machineguns toward the opening in the wall and the surrounding guard towers, now occupied by enemy soldiers.

Sgt. 1st Class Smith's actions to organize a defense against the deliberate attack were not only effective, but inspired the B Company, 11th Engineer Battalion Soldiers. He then began to lead by example. As the Bradley arrived on site and moved through the hole in the wall toward the gate, Sgt. 1st Class Smith ran to the gate wall and threw a fragmentation grenade at the enemy. He then took two Soldiers forward to join the guards and directed their engagement of the enemy with small arms. The enemy continued to fire rifles, RPGs, and 60mm mortars at the Soldiers on the street and within the courtyard. Enemy soldiers began moving along the buildings on the north side of the clearing to get into position to climb into the towers. Sgt. 1st Class Smith called for an APC to move forward to provide additional fire support. Sgt. 1st Class Smith then fired an AT-4 at the enemy while directing his fire team assembled near the front line of the engagement area.

Running low on ammunition and having taken RPG hits, the Bradley withdrew to reload. The lead APC in the area received a direct hit from a mortar, wounding the three occupants. The enemy attack was at its strongest point and every action counted. Not only were the wounded Soldiers threatened but also more than 100 Soldiers from B Company, the Task Force Aid Station, and the Mortar Platoon were at risk.

Sgt. 1st Class Smith ordered one of his Soldiers to back the damaged APC back into the courtyard after the wounded men had been evacuated. Knowing the APC's .50-Cal. machinegun was the largest weapon between the enemy and the friendly position, Sgt. 1st Class Smith immediately assumed the track commander's position behind the weapon, and told a soldier who accompanied him to "feed me ammunition whenever you hear the gun get quiet." Sgt. 1st Class Smith fired on the advancing enemy from the unprotected position atop the APC and expended at least three boxes of ammunition before being mortally wounded by enemy fire. The enemy attack was defeated. Sgt. 1st Class Smith's actions saved the lives of at least 100 Soldiers, caused the failure of a deliberate enemy attack hours after 1st Brigade seized the Baghdad Airport, and resulted in an estimated 20-50 enemy soldiers killed. His actions inspired his platoon, his Company, the 11th Engineer Battalion and Task Force 2-7 Infantry.

Sgt. 1st Class Smith's actions to lead Soldiers in direct contact with a numerically superior enemy--to personally engage the enemy with a fragmentation grenade, AT-4, and individual weapon, to ultimately assume the track commander's position to fire the .50-Cal. machinegun through at least three boxes of ammunition before being mortally wounded--demonstrates conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty. His actions prevented a penetration in the Task Force 2-7 sector, defended the aid station, mortars, and scouts, and allowed the evacuation of Soldiers wounded by indirect enemy fire.

The Medal of Honor is the nation's highest medal for valor in combat that can be awarded to members of the armed forces.

It sometimes is referred to as the "Congressional Medal of Honor" because the president awards it on behalf of the Congress.



The medal was first authorized in 1861 for Sailors and Marines, and the following year for Soldiers as well. Since then, more than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of all DOD services and the Coast Guard, as well as to a few civilians who distinguished themselves with valor.

Medals of Honor are awarded sparingly and are bestowed only to the bravest of the brave; and that valor must be well documented. So few Medals of Honor are awarded, in fact, that the only ones awarded after the Vietnam War were bestowed posthumously to Army Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon and Army Sgt. 1st Class Randall D. Shughart for valor in Somalia in 1993, and posthumously to the most recent recipient, Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith for valor in Iraq. There were no Medals of Honor awarded during Operation Desert Storm and operations in Grenada, Panama and Lebanon. However, since 1993, 39 other Medals of Honor have been awarded to correct past administrative errors, oversights, follow-ups on lost recommendations or as a result of new evidence.

Here are just a few examples of Soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor from three wars. Their actions, like the other recipients of the medal, were far and above the call of duty.

During the Civil War, the job of color bearer was one of the most hazardous as well as important duties in the Army. Soldiers looked to the flag for direction and inspiration in

battle and the bearer was usually out in front, drawing heavy enemy fire while holding the flag high. On Nov. 16, 1863, regimental color bearer Pvt. Joseph E. Brandle, from the 17th Michigan Infantry, participated in a battle near Lenoire, Tenn.

"Having been twice wounded and the sight of one eye destroyed, [he] still held to the colors until ordered to the rear by his regimental commander."

Corporal. Alvin C. York, from the 82nd Division, fearlessly engaged the numerically superior German force at Chatel-Chehery, France, on Oct. 8, 1918—just a month before the armistice was signed. His citation reads: "...After his platoon had suffered heavy casualties and three other noncommissioned officers had become casualties, Corporal. York assumed command. Fearlessly leading seven men, he charged with great daring a machine gun nest, which was pouring deadly and incessant fire upon his platoon. In this heroic feat the machine gun nest was taken, together with four officers and 128 men and several guns."

Officers, as well as enlisted, have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Valor cuts across the ranks, as well as the services.

On July 11, 1943, 2nd Lt. Robert Craig, from the 3rd Infantry Division, led his company in battle at Favoratta, Sicily. His citation reads: "...2nd Lt. Craig voluntarily undertook the perilous task of locating and destroying a hidden enemy machine gun which had halted the advance of his company. Attempts by three other officers to locate the weapon had resulted in failure, with each officer receiving wounds. 2nd Lt. Craig located the gun and snaked his way to a point within 35 yards of the hostile position before being discovered.

Charging headlong into the furious automatic fire, he reached the gun, stood over it, and killed the three crewmembers with his carbine. With this obstacle removed, his company continued its advance. Shortly thereafter while advancing down the forward slope of a ridge, 2nd Lt. Craig and his platoon, in a position devoid of cover and concealment, encountered the fire of approximately 100 enemy soldiers. Electing to sacrifice himself so that his platoon might carry on the battle, he ordered his men to withdraw to the cover of the crest while he drew the enemy fire to himself. With no hope of survival, he charged toward the enemy until he was within 25 yards of them. Assuming a kneeling position, he killed five and wounded three enemy soldiers. While the hostile force concentrated fire on him, his platoon reached the cover of the crest. 2nd Lt. Craig was killed by enemy fire, but his intrepid action so inspired his men that they drove the enemy from the area, inflicting heavy casualties on the hostile force."

These figures represent Medal of Honor recipients from each conflict and branch of the military

Conflicts	
Civil War	1522
Indian Campaigns	426
Korea 1871	15
Spanish American	110
Samoa	4
Philippine Insurrection	80
Philippine Outlaws	6
Boxer Rebellion	59
Mexican Campaign	56
Haiti	6
Dominican Republic	3
World War I	124
Haiti 1919-1920	2
Nicaraguan Campaign	2
World War II	464
Korean War	131
Vietnam	245
Somalia	2
Non-Combat	193
Unknowns	9

DOD Service Branches

Army	2400
Navy	745
Marine Corps	296
Air Force	17
Coast Guard	1
Medals Awarded	3459
Medals Awarded Posthumously	614

Lessons For Iraq From Gettysburg

By David Ignatius

GETTYSBURG, Pa. -- The most famous battlefield of the American Civil War might seem an unlikely place to look for lessons about Iraq. But as historian James McPherson leads a group of Pentagon officials in a discussion of postwar reconstruction, some startling common themes emerge.

The Pentagon officials gathered here last weekend for a conference on "Transition From Crisis." The meeting was

organized by the Highlands Forum, a discussion group sponsored by the secretary of defense and the Pentagon's research arm, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Usually, the group's meetings focus on the military implications of new technologies, such as nanotechnology or computer networking robotics. But this session was about how to rebuild societies, rather than defeat them militarily. It was Colin Powell's famous "Pottery Barn rule" revisited. You broke it, and now you own it. So how do you put it back together?

To prepare for the discussion, McPherson guided the Army generals and Pentagon civilians along the rocky slope of Little Round Top to where the 20th Maine volunteers launched the mad bayonet charge that saved the Union army's flank, and then to the open field where Confederate Gen. George Pickett made his disastrous charge against the Union lines on Cemetery Ridge. After walking the battlefield, McPherson and the group explored what happened when the war ended -- and the intriguing parallels between postwar Iraq and the postwar South.

The Civil War, like the invasion of Iraq, was a war of transformation in which the victors hoped to reshape the political culture of the vanquished. But as McPherson tells the story, reconstruction posed severe and unexpected tests: The occupying Union army was harassed by an insurgency that fused die-hard remnants of the old plantation power structure with irregular guerrillas. The Union was as unprepared for this struggle as the Coalition Provisional Authority was in Baghdad in 2003. The army of occupation was too small, and its local allies were often corrupt and disorganized.

Reconstruction suffered partly because of a mismatch between a transformational strategy and haphazard tactics. Northern radicals such as Rep. Thaddeus Stevens wanted to break the old slaveholding aristocracy and remake the South into a version of New England, with former slaves and poor whites dividing up the plantations. But within weeks of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson was moving to protect the privileges of the old regime. Even after Johnson was impeached, the government balked at enforcing the tough land-reform strategy evoked by the slogan "Forty Acres and a Mule."

For a time, it still seemed that reconstruction might work. "In 1870 things looked pretty good -- if not rosy, at least optimistic," says McPherson, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his 1988 narrative, "Battle Cry of Freedom." A black man was serving in the U.S. Senate and Northerners were investing in what they believed would be a new South.

But the insurgency was potent and took more than 1,000 lives. Along with the Ku Klux Klan, there were underground groups such as the White Brotherhood and the Knights of the White Camellia, determined to preserve the old regime's power. White insurgents staged bloody riots in Memphis and

New Orleans in 1866. The rebels also drew support from the remnants of irregular Confederate units such as Quantrill's Raiders, which produced the outlaws Frank and Jesse James. "It was a matrix of lawlessness," says Oregon law professor Garrett Epps, who chronicles the period in a forthcoming book, "Second Founding."

The poison that destroyed reconstruction was racial hatred. The white elite managed to convince poor whites that newly freed blacks were their enemies, rather than potential allies. There's an obvious analogy to the Sunni-Shiite divide that has poisoned postwar Iraq. In the South, the die-hard whites began to believe that if they held tough, the North would abandon the campaign to create a new, multiracial South. And it turned out they were right.

By 1877, says McPherson, the North essentially gave up. Demoralized by the economic depression of 1873, Northern investors pulled back from projects in the South and turned their attention to the West. The troops occupying the South were withdrawn. White Southerners, defeated in war, had won the peace. The South slipped into more than 80 years of racism, isolation and economic backwardness.

What lessons does this dismal history convey for U.S. forces in Iraq? First, what you do immediately after the end of hostilities is crucial, and mistakes made then may be impossible to undo. Don't attempt a wholesale transformation of another society unless you have the troops and political will to impose it. Above all, don't let racial or religious hatred destroy democratic political institutions as in the post-bellum South. Giving up on reconstruction led to a social and economic disaster that lasted nearly a century. That's a history nobody should want to repeat, least of all the Iraqi insurgents.

Marine Combat Vests Recalled

The Marine Corps is recalling 5,277 sets of body armor after a news agency found that some of the outer vests failed to meet ballistic standards.

Sergeants major, operations officers, and logistics officers in each of the Marine Corps' Marine Expeditionary Forces have been issued instructions on how to handle retrieval and replacement. For more information, see MARADMIN 211/05:

<http://www.usmc.mil/maradmins/maradmin2000.nsf/maradmin>

Advanced Combat Helmet Saves Lives

*By Sgt. David Foley
Army News Service
April 15, 2005*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Wearing his new helmet saved the life of one Soldier, and now he goes nowhere without it.

Staff Sgt. Shannon West, 377th Transportation Company, 68th Corps Support Battalion, 1st Corps Support Command, Fort Bragg, N.C., was riding in the passenger seat of a heavy equipment transport vehicle Feb. 14 with a convoy on its way from Baghdad International Airport to Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, to drop off supplies when his vehicle was struck with an improvised explosive device about one mile away from Camp Taji.

The IED instantly disabled West's vehicle, forcing him and his driver, Sgt. Brandon Askew, who was deafened by the blast, to exit the vehicle and get into defensive fighting positions.

"Everything we had was just blown to bits," Askew said.

When the two Soldiers exited the vehicle, they were then confronted with increasing levels of small-arms fire. West and his comrades returned fire while devising a plan to get everyone back on the move. However, their troubles were compounded when the driver of the truck two vehicles behind West's HET was unable to see through the cloud of dust and smoke and crashed into the rear of another vehicle, pinning the passenger under the dashboard, making the rescue more complicated.

Askew provided cover fire while West and one of his comrades moved to the rear vehicle where they dislodged the wounded Soldier and carried him about 100 yards to a Humvee from another convoy that had stopped to help.

All of the Soldiers made it out of the situation with minimal wounds.

More than three hours passed between the time of the blast and when West and his comrades made it back to Camp Taji for the debriefing. That's when West realized he had been hit by fragments of the IED.

"The funny thing was, I didn't know until I got here," West said. "My squad leader said "Hey sergeant West, have you seen your Kevlar?"

"When I took it off, I saw a big cut in it," he said. "When I looked inside (the helmet) I realized what had actually happened. I was surprised."

A fragment of the IED had lodged itself into West's helmet creating a hole the size of a pencil in the outer shell, but the inside of the helmet was protruding into the padding with a bump the size of a golf ball.

West said he had his doubts about the Advanced Combat Helmet when it was first issued to him, but he has changed his mind since.

"I didn't like it. It feels funny on your head and you need to adjust it every time you take it off. The only thing I liked about it is that it's light," he said. "But my faith in the (ACH) is really there. I am glad to see it actually works."

After losing one Soldier and two others receiving serious wounds because of IED attacks, West's company commander, Capt. Scott Williams, was also glad to see the effectiveness of the ACH.

"This definitely saved his life," Williams said while holding West's ACH.

The angle of trajectory probably had a lot to do with it, but if he weren't wearing the helmet, West would have probably died, he said.

Because of the effectiveness of the ACH, West will be awarded the Purple Heart for suffering a mild concussion rather than receiving a posthumous medal, something West said is a blessing, but doesn't completely settle his nerves.

My first few missions back, I was terrified," he said. "I was actually paranoid but after getting back into it, I'm ok. The first two missions were nerve racking, but now it's not too bad."

West and his comrades continue to drive the streets of Iraq taking supplies wherever they are needed, and they always wear their individual body armor and ACHs.

Citizen Soldiers Bring Unique Skills

By Charlie Coon

Stars and Stripes

Mideast Edition

April 19, 2005

BAQOUBA, [Iraq](#) — Most do not wear camouflage for a living. But they're not inexperienced.

"That's what makes the Guard unique," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Hawkins. "You've got a pool to draw from. We've got mechanics, engineers, plumbers, cops, construction workers."

Most of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty are not full-time soldiers, but rather members of the Army National Guard or [Army Reserve](#). In February, the 42nd ID took responsibility for control of north-central Iraq from the 1st Infantry Division, which had served there for a year. Its commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, has overall command of activities and of active-duty units deployed to the area.

The guardsmen and reservists say they've got what it takes to make progress in a country where 8 million people voted on Jan. 30 but attacks by insurgents continue to test the resolve of the new Iraq.

"There is irreversible momentum; this isn't going backward," Taluto said in a February interview with Stars and Stripes.

"There is a small percentage of people who make life miserable for a lot of people. The only way to stop them is to

kill them. There's no other way about it. They are hard-line extremists and are not going to give up their cause."

The citizen soldiers might be the perfect fit for the current stage of the U.S. occupation. Two years after toppling Saddam Hussein's regime, the goals for Task Force Liberty are decidedly grass-roots: tamping down a stubborn insurgency while training Iraqi soldiers and police to do the job themselves; molding dysfunctional local governments into responsive and productive entities; and enabling elections scheduled for October (to ratify the new Iraqi constitution) and December (to choose a national congress).

The guardsmen and reservists, who make up 13,000 of the 23,000 soldiers in Task Force Liberty, bring diplomatic and other real-life skills to the game.

"Back in the '90s, it would have been an issue," said Maj. Teresa Wolfgang, a reservist and company commander with the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team. "The first Gulf war changed that. A lot of the reservists and guards here have prior active duty. We now have a smaller active-duty force, especially in my field — civil affairs. We have people who have been deployed two or three times.

"If you lined them up, could you really tell?" she asked, referring to active and Reserve soldiers. "We all have our combat patches. We all have to go to the same schools."

"We might be better at solving problems at the civilian level," added Capt. Andy McConnell of the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion, a police officer and reservist from Orange County, Calif.

Some, such as Taluto, the division commander, are full-time employees of the National Guard.

"I didn't have to come here; I volunteered," said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Wombacher, a 28-year employee of the New Jersey Guard. "All my unit is activated. I didn't want my guys to go without me."

Wombacher, who is assigned to the 50th Main Support Battalion at Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, said his guardsmen spent long hours at the tank range back in the States.

In Iraq, they fix weapons, tanks, laser range-finders and howitzers.

"Most of the guys in my section have trained with me for 10 years at a minimum," Wombacher said. "We've got a lot of technicians activated for this deployment.

"As far as the knowledge, you don't have to look for it. It's there."

Sound Off...What do you think? [Join the discussion.](#)

Rumsfeld Speaks Up Against Up-And-Out

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says he would like to do away with the system that forces service members out at the prime of their careers. The system that moves people up then out when they are "at the peak of their capabilities" does the country "a big disservice," the secretary said. He added that he is frequently frustrated to see top-notch service members, many just 38 or 40 years old, forced to leave the military -- taking with them extensive experience they could share with others.

Rumsfeld also said he would like to change the system that moves people too quickly from one job to the next.

"We've found an awful lot of wonderfully talented people who have moved through their positions too fast," he said. This cuts down on the learning process and their ability to master a job, he noted.

"Wounded Warrior" Legislation on Its Way to the President

House and Senate negotiators have agreed to legislation that will benefit traumatically injured military personnel. The "wounded warrior" amendment, sponsored by Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho), is part of an \$82.04 billion package now on its way to the president. Military members traumatically injured would receive from \$25,000 to \$100,000 for injuries.

In addition to the "Wounded Warrior" benefits, the new legislation on its way the president authorizes the Department of Defense to increase to \$500,000 the amount that can be paid to surviving families of deceased servicemen.

New Campaign Medals Issued

The Department of Defense announced the creation of two campaign medals for Afghanistan and Iraq to recognize members who made specific sacrifices and significant contributions in these areas of operation. Servicemembers authorized the Afghanistan Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom on or after Oct. 24, 2001. Those authorized the Iraq Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on or after March 19, 2003. For more information, including eligibility requirements, see this article:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2005/nr20050407-2441.html>.

To see images of the new campaign medals, go to <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2005/d20050407MedalPic.pdf>

VFW Commander Blasts VA Budget

Responding to the \$990 million increase in next year's congressional budget proposal for the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system, VFW commander John Furgess charged, "This is a budget that's headed in the wrong direction." The VA estimates it needs annual increases of 12 to 14 percent just to keep pace with inflation and other uncontrollable expenses, and the \$990 million budget figure represents an increase of only 3.6 percent over fiscal 2005.

"This proposal will have virtually no impact in the VA health care being provided to those returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, where modern medical care and body-armor advances are saving more lives, but often at the cost of limbs and other traumatic injuries," said Furgess. The budget recommendation went to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees which will consider actual funding.

VA Seeking OIF/OEF Outreach Counselors

The Department of Veterans Affairs will hire 50 veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) to provide outreach services to veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. They will join 50 other OIF/ OEF outreach counselors already hired by the VA. The outreach counselors will brief members leaving the service about VA benefits and services available to them and their family members. They also will encourage new veterans to use their local Vet Center as a point of entry to VA and its services.

Outreach counselors visit military installations, coordinate with military family assistance centers and conduct one-on-one interviews with returning veterans and their families. The new counselors will be located in the 206 Vet Centers operated by VA throughout the country, especially near military out-processing stations. They will be hired for a three-year period.

Bilirakis Introduces Full Concurrent Receipt Bill

Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., has introduced HR-2076, which would provide full concurrent receipt to all military retirees rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as 100 percent unemployable regardless of their VA disability rating. The provision would be effective immediately. In addition, the bill would authorize a 10-year phase-in of concurrent receipt for retirees with VA disability ratings of 40 percent and lower. The measure is part of a trio of Bilirakis' bills designed to end many of the inequities not covered by earlier legislation. For example, his HR-303 would authorize concurrent receipt immediately for all military retirees with any disability rating. His HR-1366, on the other hand, would authorize combat-related special compensation to individuals who were medically retired before they served 20 years.

Supreme Court to Decide Campus Recruiter Ban

The Supreme Court announced on May 2 that it will decide whether some law schools may curb military recruiters' access to their students in protest of the Defense Department policy of excluding gays from military service.

The action stems from a ruling Nov. 29 by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that universities have a First Amendment right to bar recruiters under such circumstances without losing federal money. At issue is the 1995 Solomon Amendment, which barred the federal government from disbursing money to colleges and universities that obstruct on-campus recruiting by the military. Until the court's ruling, the law, as amended and interpreted, has prohibited disbursements to all parts of a university if any of its units obstruct military recruiting in any way.

Army Demotes General In Prison Scandal

Associated Press

May 6, 2005

WASHINGTON - The [Army](#) said Thursday that only one general will be disciplined for failed leadership in connection with the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal and that more than a dozen lower-ranking officers have received a variety of punishments.

The Army said it demoted Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, whose Army Reserve unit was in charge of the prison compound when Iraqi detainees were physically abused and sexually humiliated by military police and intelligence soldiers in the fall of 2003. When photos of some of the abuse became public a year ago a firestorm of criticism erupted worldwide.

The Army also announced that it cleared three other, more senior generals of wrongdoing in the prisoner abuse cases, actions that had been previously reported but not publicly confirmed by the Army.

That leaves Karpinski as the only general officer to be disciplined thus far. The demotion means her career in the military, where officers must rise in rank or leave, is effectively over.

Messages left at her home in Hilton Head, S.C., and with her attorney were not returned. Neal A. Puckett, Karpinski's attorney, told The Washington Post that the Army is seeking to punish a general officer to show that action has been taken but has distanced her from the actual abuse to absolve other senior leaders.

"They're saying she's the only senior leader that had any part in this, but they're saying she didn't have a direct part in it," Puckett said. "I think they're trying to have it both ways. They are severing the chain of command right at her eyeball level, and not letting it go higher."

The Senate Armed Services Committee has said it intends to hold hearings soon to assess whether senior Defense

Department civilian and military leaders were adequately held accountable for Abu Ghraib.

The Army described its investigations as exhaustive, requiring six months of work including sworn-statement interviews with 82 people, including L. Paul Bremer, who was the top civilian authority in [Iraq](#) at the time, and Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Among those cleared by the Army was Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, who was the top Army general in Iraq at the time of the prisoner abuses. He has been faulted by some for leadership failures but has never been accused of ordering or sanctioning any abuse of prisoners.

The Army said it could not substantiate two allegations against Sanchez: dereliction in the performance of duties pertaining to detention and interrogation operations and improperly communicating interrogation policies.

Sanchez is currently the commander of 5th Corps, headquartered at Heidelberg, Germany.

Karpinski was demoted to colonel, a move that required approval by President Bush. She also received a written reprimand by Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Cody and was formally relieved of command of the 800th Military Police Brigade on April 8, the Army said in a statement.

The Army's inspector general investigated four allegations against Karpinski: dereliction of duty, making a "material misrepresentation" to investigators, failure to obey a lawful order and shoplifting. Only the shoplifting and dereliction of duty allegations were substantiated.

The Army did not explain the specifics of the allegations, but a number of previous investigations of the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuses have accused Karpinski of failing to maintain order and prevent the abuses. She has said publicly that she was not given full authority over Abu Ghraib and that when photographs of the abuse became public she was made a scapegoat.

A U.S. government official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Karpinski was accused of shoplifting a cosmetic item from a shop at a domestic Air Force base while she held the rank of colonel. Karpinski did not report her arrest for this misdemeanor on a later background check, the official said. In an interview with CBS News last year, Karpinski denied shoplifting.

The generals who were cleared, besides Sanchez, were Maj. Gen. Walter Wojdakowski, who was Sanchez's deputy in Iraq at the time, and Sanchez's intelligence chief, Maj. Gen. Barbara Fast. Both were accused of dereliction of duty, but the allegations were not substantiated.

Fast is now commander of the Army Intelligence Center and Wojdakowski is a special assistant to the commander of U.S. Army Europe.

Col. Marc Warren, who was Sanchez's top uniformed lawyer in Iraq, also was cleared of allegations of dereliction and "professional impropriety under lawyers' ethics rules," the Army said.

Without providing their names, the Army also said Thursday that one colonel and two lieutenant colonels linked to detainee abuses in Iraq and [Afghanistan](#) were given unspecified administrative punishment. Also, two other lieutenant colonels were given letters of reprimand.

More than a dozen other lower-ranking officers, whose names were not released, also received various punishments.

- Three majors were given letters of reprimand and one of the three also was given an unspecified administrative punishment.
- Three captains have been court-martialed, one captain was given an other-than-honorable discharge from the Army, five captains received letters of reprimand and one was given an unspecified administrative punishment.
- Two first lieutenants have been court-martialed, another got a letter of reprimand and one was given administrative punishment.
- One second lieutenant was given an other-than-honorable discharge and another was given a letter of reprimand.
- Two chief warrant officers have been court-martialed.

The Army said other cases involving officers linked to detainee abuse are still open, but it did not say how many. Among the open cases are those of Col. Thomas Pappas, commander of the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade at Abu Ghraib, and Lt. Col. Stephen Jordan, who directed the prison's interrogation center. Both face possible criminal charges, Army officials have said.

Sound Off...What do you think? [Join the discussion.](#)

Pilot Pleads Guilty In Helo Crash

*Associated Press
May 6, 2005*

WHEELER ARMY AIR FIELD, Hawaii - An [Army](#) helicopter pilot pleaded guilty to negligent homicide on Thursday, admitting he was showing off before his [Black Hawk](#) helicopter crashed in Afghanistan last year and killed the crew chief.

Under a plea agreement, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darrin R. Rogers, 37, was sentenced to 120 days at Fort Leavenworth military prison in Kansas and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. He also must retire from the Army but will retain his pension.

Judge Col. Debra Boudreau had sentenced Rogers to four years and two months imprisonment, forfeiture of all pay and dismissal from the Army.

The plea agreement, however, superseded Boudreau's sentence because it capped the maximum punishment for Rogers.

"I'm not a bad person," Rogers said when he was asking the judge for leniency. "All I wanted to be was in the military."

Rogers also pleaded guilty to reckless endangerment, failure to carry out a lawful order and destruction of government property.

Before accepting his plea, Boudreau had asked Rogers whether he was showing off when the \$6 million Black Hawk helicopter crashed last August.

"Yes, ma'am, basically I was trying to impress the guys in the back," Rogers said.

The career pilot was in the air waiting to start a demonstration to show a visiting military commander how the transport helicopter can deliver troops to the battlefield quickly.

An Army investigation report said Marines on board the helicopter twice urged Rogers, "Fly hard." The first time he refused, but the second time the response from the cockpit was: "You asked for it."

Rogers testified he performed a move in which the helicopter ascended rapidly and then dropped, causing a feeling of weightlessness. He said a piece of equipment drifted into the cockpit, jamming the controls and preventing him from pulling out of the dive.

The Black Hawk plunged to the ground, killing Sgt. Daniel Lee Galvan, 30, and injuring the 14 other people on board.

Investigators said Rogers conducted "maneuvers unnecessary for the mission."

Rogers entered the guilty pleas at the start of his court-martial.

Galvan's parents sobbed as they testified as the sentencing phase of the trial got under way. His mother, Nelda Galvan of Moore, Okla., said she was "angry that my son lost his life for no good reason, especially since he trusted Mr. Rogers with his life."

Galvan's widow, Sonya Galvan of Lubbock, Texas, also attended the trial. She told The Associated Press she hopes the court-martial makes other pilots aware of the consequences of their actions.

"He has no idea how much my kids are struggling, how this has affected our lives," she said.

After the 12-hour court-martial, Galvan's family said they were disappointed with the sentence and that nothing could have been done to relieve their pain.

But Sonya Galvan said she was pleased that Rogers will never fly again for the Army and "he'll never be able to do this to anyone else."

She said her husband, who aspired to be a pilot, has "finally earned his wings."

"My husband is finally able to fly and rest," she said.

Sound Off...What do you think? [Join the discussion.](#)

Military Families May Access Some Boarding Gates

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a program to allow family members without tickets to accompany their service member to airline boarding gates or to meet the service member upon arrival. Although TSA supports the concept and has issued guidelines for its operation, the final decision is up to each airline and airport. Family members who want a gate pass should ask for one at the ticket counter while the military member is getting a boarding pass. If the airport and carrier participate, the family members will be given a pass.

They will be required to show it along with a government-issued photo ID card at screening checkpoints.

They and their belongings also will have to go through the security screening process.

Radio Messages Connect Families to Front Lines

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) recently introduced its Patriot Family Connection program to help connect deployed military members with their loved ones back home. The new program offers family members, friends of deployed service members and AAFES associates a chance to record their greetings, words of support and thanks.

Messages can be recorded 24 hours a day, free of charge, and are forwarded to American Forces Network (AFN) Radio, which is heard at locations overseas including those in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Anyone can record a message simply by calling 1-800-713-1302 and following the prompts.

For more information, log on to the AAFES Web site at <http://www.aafes.com/> and click on the Patriot Family link at http://www.aafes.com/Patriot_Family/home.aspx

Winning the Car Wars

Putting assets in trust can protect them from creditors but not every asset can or should be transferred to a trust.

Your house and your cars, for example, are generally not suited to be held in trust. Some states exempt such assets from the reach of creditors, but there may be dollar limits on these exemptions.

For your cars, here are some ideas:

- To protect a vehicle from creditors, you might lease a new one each year with zero down so that little or no equity builds up. A creditor can only take what actually belongs to you, not what's owned by the bank.
- If you operate a sideline business as a corporation and the vehicle is used for a legitimate business purpose, the corporation can own the car. Again, such ownership may keep a car from being attached by creditors.
- Let your spouse own the family cars (and the house, too). As long as you're in a sound marriage, this a simple way to keep assets from your ownership and out of the reach of your creditors, assuming you're the spouse most likely to need asset protection.

Hands Off

When you leave your employer, you can receive a distribution from your retirement plan. Then you have 60 days to roll the funds into an IRA. However, your employer will be required to withhold 20 percent of the amount in your account.

Say you leave a job where you have \$300,000 in a retirement plan. When you request a distribution, your employer will pay you only \$240,000 and withhold \$60,000 (20 percent of \$300,000) for federal income tax.

If you don't deposit the difference—\$60,000 in this example—into an IRA within 60 days, the \$60,000 will be taxable income to you. You'll owe income tax and there will be less money in your IRA for future growth. In addition, if this happens before age 55, you'll also owe a 10 percent penalty.

Fortunately, this tax trap can be avoided with a trustee-to-trustee transfer. You should create an IRA and have your employer transfer your retirement plan balance into that account. No withholding will be required.

Moreover, if you need to tap your retirement plan, you should try to avoid a rollover between ages 55 and 59 1/2. IRA withdrawals before age 59 1/2 are subject to a 10 percent penalty, in most cases.

On the other hand, you can take money from an employer-sponsored plan, penalty-free, if you were at least 55 years old in the year you left your job. In between those ages, you're better off taking withdrawals from an employer plan rather than from an IRA, if your employer will keep holding the money for you.

Home Sweet Tax Shelter

Homeowners generally can deduct the interest they pay on their mortgages—but that's not the only tax benefit available if you own a home.

- Real estate property taxes are usually deductible.
- Anyone who builds a home can deduct the sales tax paid on homebuilding materials. That amount can be added to the sales tax number from the IRS table, if you choose to deduct state sales tax rather than state income tax.
- Frequently, homebuyers pay "points"—extra charges—at closing in order to obtain a mortgage. They might be called discount points, loan discounts, loan origination fees, or maximum loan charges. Because points are usually paid in return for a lower interest rate, they're really prepaid interest so they are generally tax-deductible.
- Points paid during refinancing must be deducted over the life of the loan. For a thirty-year loan, you get to deduct 1/30 of that amount each year.

However, if you do a "cash out" refinance and use some of the funds to improve your primary residence, a portion of the points are deductible in the year you paid them. For example, if you obtained a \$200,000 loan via refinancing and \$50,000 was used for home improvement, then one-fourth of the points are deductible in the year you obtained the loan.

Costly Credit

Certain types of debt are better than others. Worst, by far, is credit card debt: the interest you pay might be as high as 20 percent, aftertax, because interest on credit card debt is nondeductible. Thus, if you have credit card debt you should pay more than the required minimum to reduce what you owe. When you pay down a credit card balance with an 18 percent interest rate, for example, you're effectively earning 18 percent per year, aftertax, risk-free.

Look at your credit card statements to see the effective interest rates. Pay the minimum on your low-rate cards while you pay off the high-rate cards as quickly as possible.

Then pay off the low-rate cards.

To help you do this, check your mail for offers of low initial rates on credit cards. You can roll to low-rate cards to reduce the interest charges while you pay off the balances.

Fund Formula

Many mutual fund investors (and investors in general) send a good portion of their profits to the IRS as well as to state and local tax collectors. Fortunately, a knowledge of the rules and some savvy planning can help you keep more of your investment income for yourself.

If you invest outside of a retirement plan and put your money into mutual funds, you'll owe tax each year on net earnings realized by the fund. That's true even if you hold onto your fund shares and reinvest all the distributions.

Suppose, for example, you put your money into a mutual fund and the manager decides to sell many of the fund's long-term holdings, which generates a gain. That gain will be passed through to you, as a shareholder, and you'll owe tax right away, even if you instruct the fund that all distributions are to be reinvested.

Therefore, if you're going to sell a fund at a loss, sell before it makes a capital gains distribution, because your tax loss will be greater. Similarly, try to avoid buying a fund before right before a distribution, because you'll receive that distribution and owe taxes. Most funds will tell callers when distributions can be expected.

Another tactic is to buy a "tax-managed" mutual fund. Funds that are intentionally tax-efficient usually avoid taxable distributions by low turnover of their securities or by taking losses to offset realized gains.

Declaration Of Dependence

Middle-aged children helping to support parents or other elderly loved ones often find those costs to be extensive. You can reduce the effective cost if you're able to claim one or both of your parents as dependents. Each dependency exemption you can claim provides a \$3,200 deduction in 2005, up from \$3,100 in 2004.

Certain tests must be met in order for you to claim a parent as a dependent.

- **Income:** Your parent's income can't exceed the dependency exemption amount: \$3,200 in 2005. This amount refers to taxable income. For low-income parents, Social Security benefits aren't taxable so this won't be a problem.

Tax-exempt interest doesn't count, either, so you might want to switch your parent's bank accounts to tax-exempt bonds or funds.

- Support: You must provide over half of a parent's support during the year. If your parent lives with you, you can put a fair rental value on the housing you provide, as well as the food, medicine, transportation, etc. that you pay for.

If your parent does not live with you, money you pay towards rent or other housing costs can be included in your share of the support.

You should keep track of this calculation throughout the year and make sure you wind up paying at least 51 percent. Urge your parent to defer year-end spending of personal funds if it's a close call.

Multiple Choice

If you and your siblings join forces to support an elderly parent, none of you may be able to claim a dependency exemption. That would be true if no one sibling provides over 50 percent of the parent's support.

In such situations, you and your siblings can agree to file Form 2120, a Multiple Support Declaration, on your tax return. Each signer must contribute at least 10 percent of the parent's support for the year, and the total must exceed 50 percent. In addition, the parent's income can't exceed the dependency exemption amount: \$3,200 in 2005.

Assuming those conditions are met, the siblings can agree that one brother or sister will take the dependency exemption in a given year, and take a tax deduction.

The next year, another sibling may claim it, by agreement. However, a sibling with income over \$220,000 should not be included in the rotation because he or she will get little or no tax benefit, because of a phase out of the dependency deduction.

Cracking The Nest Egg For Early Birds

Many retirees rely upon their investment portfolios to support their lifestyle. If you start receiving Social Security benefits at the youngest possible age (62), try these tax-savvy tactics:

- Don't sell appreciated securities you hold in taxable accounts. As long as you defer taking gains, you'll hold down your adjusted gross income, which may lower the tax you'll owe on your Social Security benefits.
- Try to hold your appreciated securities as long as possible. If you die while still owning them, your heirs might get a "step-up in basis," depending on the tax law at that time. If so, no income tax will be paid on the appreciation of those investments during your lifetime.

- Try to postpone taking IRA distributions until they're required, after you reach age 70 1/2. Such a delay can mean that your IRA will continue compounding, tax-deferred.

Again, deferring distributions will reduce your income, which can trim tax on your Social Security benefits.

Moreover, a larger IRA will be left to your heirs, for ongoing tax-deferral.

Where should you turn for cash? Try drawing your taxable accounts before age 70 1/2, tapping securities selling at a loss or those without substantial appreciation.

Losing The Name Game

If you purchase U.S. Savings Bonds for young children, be careful how you title them. Under some conditions, the interest on these bonds might be tax-free.

However, to qualify for this tax break, a bond must be issued solely in the taxpayer's name, or in the name of the taxpayer and spouse.

The owner must be at least age 24 before the bond's issue date.

Thus, a bond issued in the name of the taxpayer and his or her child as joint owners will not qualify; nor will a bond bought by a parent and issued in the name of his or her child under age 24.

If the child is named not as co-owner but as beneficiary, the bonds may still qualify for the tax break. Moreover, if an EE Savings Bond is co-owned by a parent and child, it may be possible to reissue the bond solely in the parent's name.

The Code of Federal Regulations provides that a bond issued in co-ownership may be reissued in the name of either co-owner alone if both co-owners are related by blood (or legal adoption) or marriage to each other. "I bonds" (inflation-indexed Savings Bonds) do not afford the same flexibility.

Keep in mind that income must be under \$91,850 on a joint return (in 2005) for a full exclusion of the interest income. A partial exclusion is available with income up to \$121,850.

An Education In Tax Savings

If your child has money in a custodial account, consider liquidating that account and placing the proceeds in a 529-college savings plan. By doing so, you'll avoid income taxes on the earnings in the account.

However, you must be sure that the funds will be used for higher education expenses. If not, any earnings will be taxed as ordinary income and subject to a 10 percent penalty, upon withdrawal.

You won't gain any flexibility by making such a move because the account still will be subject to Uniform Transfers (or Gifts) to Minors Act. Thus, the 529-account owner cannot change the beneficiary or direct a distribution to anyone other than the beneficiary of the custodial account. In fact, when the beneficiary attains the age for distribution of the custodial account (generally, at 18), the youngster should become the owner of the 529 account.

****TRIVIA QUESTIONS****

Very talented character actor known for his military roles, was in the Marine Corps for eleven years.

He got his most famous, (or infamous) role as a Gunnery Sergeant Drill Instructor in the movie "Full Metal Jacket", in which he was nominated for a Golden Globe.

He was cast as a Helicopter pilot in Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now". Due to his Vietnam experiences, Coppola also utilized him as a technical advisor.

He got a featured role in Sidney Furie's "The Boys in Company C".

(Answer on page 23)

****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:

- Adams, Earl, MG – adams_earl@msn.com
- Amoroso, Francis (Frank) J, COL – colonelandbetty@nlis.net
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Correct Mailing Address



It is imperative that we have your correct mailing address in order for you to receive your newsletter.

Please provide your correct mailing address by contacting 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 1,330 members strong.

Dean A. Soule

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****ANSWERS TO TRIVIA****

Gunnery
Sergeant Ronald
Lee Ermey

Very talented character actor known for his military roles, R. Lee Ermey was in the Marine Corps for eleven years. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant, and his Marine service included one and a half tours in Vietnam. After injuries forced him to retire from military service, he moved to the Phillipines, enrolling in the University of Manila, where he studied Criminology and Drama. He appeared in several Phillipino films, before being cast as a Helicopter pilot in Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now. Due to his Vietnam experiences, Coppola also utilized him as a technical advisor. He got a featured role in Sidney Furie's The Boys in Company C, Playing A drill instructor. Ermey worked with Furie again in Purple Hearts. However, Ermey got his most famous, (or infamous) role as Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket, for which Ermey was nominated for a Golden Globe. Ermey did win the best supporting actor [award](#) from The Boston Society of Film Critics. Since then, Ermey has appeared in numerous character roles in such films as Leaving Las Vegas, Se7en, and Dead Man Walking. Ermey, however, prefers comedy to drama, and has a comedic role in Saving Silverman. Ronald Lee Ermey continues to be one of the best character actors to date, and you can bet that when his name appears in a movies credits, he is going to be top notch in his role.



Was not intended to be in [Full Metal Jacket](#) (1987). He was on the set to show the actor how to be a sergent but did such a better job that they hired him to play the part.

Served in the U.S. Marine Corps from April 1961 to October 1971 under the service number 195 60 39. Was retired as a Staff Sergeant on a medical disability.

Although he retired from the United States Marine Corps in 1971, Ermey was later awarded the Honorary rank of Gunnery Sergeant.

U.S. Marine Corps awards and decorations include: Meritorious Unit Commendation, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal (w/bronze service star), Vietnam Campaign Medal (w/60 Device), Vietnam Gallantry Cross (w/Palm), Good Conduct Medal (w/2 bronze service stars), Marksman Badge (w/Rifle Bar) and Sharpshooter Badge (w/Pistol Bar).

After injuries forced him to retire from military service, he moved to the Phillipines and enrolled in the University of Manila, where he studied Criminology and Drama.

Used the same line ("You're not afraid of a little blood, are you?") in two consecutive movies - Willard and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

Chosen as first celebrity spokesperson for Glock firearms and products in 2004.

