
MEARNG RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 2

<http://www.state.me.us/va/defense/retirees.htm>

May - Aug 1999

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PUBLISHED BY THE MEARNG RETIREE COUNCIL

COMMENTARY This is the eleventh Retiree Newsletter, normally published in Apr, Aug and Dec. Our purpose is to keep you informed and provide you a continuing sense of belonging to the Guard after retirement. We hope the newsletter helps accomplish that purpose. Let us know what you think and how we can improve it. We value your opinion. Please advise the Council of any errors or omissions.

Information is furnished through various sources. 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 e-mail it to gmusk@mint.net or souleda@me-arng.ngb.army.mil

We are constantly up-dating our mailing list to include all MEARNG retirees. If you know any retiree(s) who are not receiving the newsletter, please send their name to a member of the Retiree Council or e-mail us. *Please advise us of mailing address changes due to 911.* If you do not wish to continue receiving the newsletter, contact a council member.

ORGANIZATION

Nothing to report at this time.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

TRICARE OR CHAMPUS

For the latest information, call CW5 Roussel at 626-4338 or SFC Buck at 626-4283, MENG-HRO-AGR. TRICARE related information may be obtained on the Internet at www.tricaare.osd.mil.



(The following TRICARE Management Activity message is provided by CW5 Roussel.)

One-Time-Only Special Enrollment Period For Medicare Part B Offered To “Dual-Eligibles”

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) is offering a special enrollment period for Medicare Part B, to persons under 65 who are both TRICARE-eligible and Medicare-eligible because of disability, but who have not yet enrolled in Medicare Part B.

If you're eligible, you may enroll at any time during May, June and July 1999. Your Medicare Part B coverage will begin July 1, 1999.

The Part B premium for 1999 is \$45.50 per month, plus any applicable surcharge. But, it's important to be aware that, if you became eligible for Medicare Part A because of disability on or after July 1, 1992 through June 30, 1999, and if you enroll in Part B during this special enrollment period, you will not be required to pay a surcharge/penalty payment for not having enrolled in Part B earlier. If you became eligible for Medicare Part A before July 1, 1992, you'll pay a reduced surcharge/penalty, because the months beginning with July 1992 through June 1999 won't be counted in determining the amount of the surcharge you pay.

If you don't enroll in Part B during this special enrollment period, you can only enroll during the regular enrollment period from Jan.1 – Mar 31 each year. Part B coverage will then begin on July 1 of the year in which you enroll. The Part B premium will be increased 10% for each full 12 month period that you were not enrolled in Part B after you first became eligible.

If you enroll in Part B during this special enrollment period and stay enrolled-your TRICARE eligibility will continue until you become 65. If you don't enroll in Part B during this special period, your TRICARE eligibility will end June 30, 1999.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS (CONTINUED)**TRICARE OR CHAMPUS (CONTINUED)**

If you enroll in Part B, TRICARE will become “last payer” for your health care costs on the date that Part B becomes effective, until you reach 65. You’ll remain eligible for care at uniformed services medical facilities, on a space-available basis.

If you enroll or re-enroll in Medicare Part B, your Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) record will need to be updated. The easiest way to do this is to take a copy of your notice from the Social Security Administration (SSA) showing your entitlement to Part B, or your new Medicare card showing your Part A and Part B entitlement dates, to the nearest military ID issuing office. If this isn’t possible, mail a copy of the documentation to the following address: DMDC Support Office (ATTN:CA), DOD Center-Monterey Bay, 400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA 93955-6771.

This action will assist in updating your DEERS record to reflect your current benefits and will facilitate claims processing by TRICARE contractors. Be sure to include your Social Security Number on all correspondence.

Call DEERS at 1-800-538-9552 in the event you have questions about your benefits, your DEERS record or need assistance. Hours of operation are from 6 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Pacific Time), Monday through Friday.

If you have questions about enrolling in Medicare Part B, call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 or visit any Social Security Office.

TRANSITIONS**Retirements through July 1999**

SFC Thomas Copeland

SGM Larry Doyle

SFC James Rioux

Taps

SFC Joseph Chamberlain

SSG Steven Marquis

SSG Frederick Parmenter

VETERAN’S CORNER

By Frank Soares, Director, Bureau of Maine Veterans’ Services



The majority of the information this issue has to do with the action of the last Legislative Session. A copy of the latest newsletter from the Advisory Commission on Women Veterans is included for your information. Please attempt to pass it on to all the women veterans you know in Maine.

Northern Maine Cemetery The Legislature gave the Department the authority to receive a donation of sixty acres of land from a veteran in Caribou to build a cemetery for Aroostock County. Additionally, the Legislature authorized \$15,000 in startup funds. Planning has started to open this facility as soon as possible. It is anticipated that this facility will be run out of Augusta, will not bury in the winter months and will not have any full time staff. A number of veterans are in the process of forming a Cemetery Association similar to the one in Augusta.

LD 1938 – Equity for Veterans of the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf Adds a new period of service for Vietnam and aligns the State periods of service for the Persian Gulf with the Federal periods (no end to that conflict has yet to be declared). This correction affects all State benefits for veterans.

LD 89 – A Study to Standardize Periods of Military Service During the last session, there were so many bills affecting veterans, and many were often conflicting with some of the other proposals, the Legislature decided to study the issues affecting veterans. The bill, often referred to as the “Omnibus Bill,” requires the Legislature to conduct a study and report to the Legislature when it reconvenes in January ’00. There are no non-Legislative personnel on the committee. It is anticipated that the study will start in September and will include public hearings across the State. As we receive more information on this study, we distribute it to you.

LD 2116 – Provide Funds for a National World War II Memorial in Washington This bill donated \$1 for all the Maine men and women who served in World War II. The donation was approximately \$109,000 total.



VETERAN'S CORNER CONTINUED)

LD 313 – Allow Peacetime Veterans to Be Buried at the MVMC This bill is still being considered at the 11th hour of this session. It seems probable that the Legislature will pass something that will allow peacetime veterans, reservists who are drawing a 20-year retirement plus the wartime veterans to be buried at the MVMC. Please check with this office in week or so to find out the outcome of this legislation. Do not make plans based on this LD until you know the results of today's legislative efforts.

Since our last issue, there has been some other important veterans related information.

Togus. The VISN 1 has directed Togus to make up the fiscal shortfall they have been projecting. These savings have to be accomplished by 1 October. This "tightening" will cause significant changes in program administration, the loss of 17 full time employees but no loss of programs. However, the budget that was requested by the President, and has yet to be approved and actioned by the VISN's for next fiscal year ('00), will cause the actual loss of programs and other major cutbacks.

Along the same lines, there continues to be talk of a march on Washington, DC. This time the march is projected for 1 million veterans on Veterans Day. At this writing, I do not know of any major veterans group that has signed on for such an event. In any event, the talk increases as the cutbacks continue.

New Cemetery. Plans for the new Augusta cemetery continue. The designers, Mohr & Seredin of Portland, have completed their basic site investigation and now move into the preliminary design phase. All of this work is none too soon since we have about one year's space available.

The new cemetery will have space for 25 years of burials, all new grounds equipment will be purchased and buildings will be built for a Memorial Chapel and administrative uses. New office equipment, computer systems, underground watering systems, asphalt roads and similar devices will be included in the purchase price. Discussions continue with the Veterans Homes to gain their assistance in building a home for the Military Historical Association at this new cemetery.

Moves. Lastly, and you may know this already, Joe Tinkham, who is now serving as the Department Deputy Commissioner, will be moving. At the end of the month, he assumes the duties of the Executive Director of the Maine

Veteran Homes. This will be a real strong shot in the arm for the Homes and all the veterans of Maine. His loss will be felt in the Department but he will be a great veterans advocate.

Home Loans for Guardsman

I have received some inquires from Guardsman/Reservists concerning VA home loans. Contrary to the old VA publications, the latest pamphlet states: "Individuals are eligible if they have completed at least six years in the Reserves or National Guard or were discharged because of service connected disability. This eligibility expires 28 Oct 99."

Please insure that the RC component personnel you are talking to are aware of this change. It is important that they know that it is not necessary to have been mobilized to qualify!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Armed Forces of the U.S. Retiree Appreciation Day

Armed Forces of the U.S. Retiree Appreciation Day will take place on August 14, 1999 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Augusta Armory. Military retirees of all branches of the Armed Forces and all reserve components including gray area retirees (under age 60) may attend. Retirees and family members will be able to update ID cards, make address changes, receive legal assistance, prepare wills, get health care updates, veterans cemetery information, veterans administration information and much more. The event, sponsored by the Maine National Guard in cooperation with the New Hampshire and Vermont National Guard, Brunswick Naval Air Station and the Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont Retiree Councils, is an extension of the Retired Services Office, Fort Drum, NY. Maine hosts this activity once every four years and over 1400 retirees and family members are expected to attend. For more information, see the "Military Retirees" attachment to this newsletter

Inactivation Ceremony, 314th Medical Company (AMB)

All retirees and their families are invited to attend the Inactivation Ceremony of the 314th Medical. Company (AMB) being held at the Armed Forces Reserve Center, Bangor, on August 7, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. See attachment for further details.

Maine Military Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Maine Military Historical Society Annual meeting will be held at the Senator Motel, Augusta, on October 9, 1999. The theme of this year's meeting will be 100 years of Maine's involvement in wars and other military events. There will be with a social hour at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 o'clock.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Gray Area Retirees (individuals who have retired but are not age 60) will not be able to get into the Commissary with Military ID Card alone. You must have a Commissary Card. The Commissary Card should come from The Army Personnel Center, St. Louis. If you do not receive it, the number to call is: 1-314-592-0568 (commercial) or 892-0568 (DSN).
- On March 12, 1999 the Maine National Guard, both Army and Air, received a proclamation from Bangor Mayor Joe Baldacci in recognition for the contributions made to the City. The proclamation further cited the MENG for outstanding commitment to service and support for the community and nation

Retiree E-Mail Addresses

Listed below are e-mail addresses of some of our retirees. If you'd like to be included, please furnish us your address and we'll publish it in this column.

COL David Blair - dhblair@mint.net

BG Nathan Grass - ngrass@ainop.com

SFC Peter Howland - moat@juno.com

LTC James Laflin - james.laflin@state.me.us

BG Donald Marden - dhmarden@mint.net

SFC Gary Owen - gsowen@mint.net

1SG Allen Perkins - almar@cybertours.com

SFC Dean Soule - deano@clinic.net

MAJ Richard West - major063@aol.com

BG Edwin Whitney - edwhitney@clinic.net

Correct Mailing Address

If anyone knows the correct mailing address for the following retirees, give it to one of the council members so we can update our database. If anyone has a change in his or her mailing address, please keep us informed. We want to be sure that all retirees will get their newsletter or any other information that is worthy.

- COL Hebbard, Nathan C.
- SFC Kivler, Thomas C.
- SGT Dumais, Adrien A.
- LTC Haynes, Paul S.
- SGT Foss, Stephen W.

**RETIREE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Romain Savoie	Nathan Grass
Gautrey Musk	Robert Weymouth
Albert White, Jr.	Douglas Welsh, Jr.
James Laflin	Martin Asdourian
Donald Laflin	Dean Soule
Edward Davis	David Blair
Clifton Johnson	

