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# MEARNG RETIREE NEWSLETTER

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

Sep- Dec 1999

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



PUBLISHED BY THE MEARNG RETIREE COUNCIL

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**COMMENTARY** This is the twelfth 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 us 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@gwi.net](mailto:gmusk@gwi.net) or [souleda@me-arng.ngb.army.mil](mailto:souleda@me-arng.ngb.army.mil)

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.

**New Members Needed. Membership is open to retirees of all ranks and gender from all parts of Maine. We would especially like to see more enlisted folks participate. If you or a retiree you know are interested, please contact a Council member.**

## RETIREMENT BENEFITS

### TRICARE OR CHAMPUS

For the latest information, call CW5 Roussel at 626-4338 or SFC Buck at 626-4283, MENG-HRO-AGR or click on [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil) on the Internet.

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/pwba/public/health.html> is a web site that contains considerable information on medical care and health insurance. This site also has lots of "buttons" that will take you to many other sites with useful information.



## TRANSITIONS

### Retirements through November 1999

LTC William Blaine  
SGT Blaine Brown Jr.  
SSG Robert Caldwell  
SFC Henry Chalmers  
MSG Jeanne Clements  
SGT Stuart Cray  
COL William Giguere  
SSG Shiela Hoyt  
MAJ Mark Kalata  
SFC Alfred Lizotte  
CW3 Vincent Mahany  
1SG Wayne Newbegin  
SSG Lee Nicely  
SSG Jack Parisi  
1SG Richard Parker  
SFC Jared Smith  
COL James Tracey

## VETERAN'S CORNER



**By Frank Soares, Director, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services**

There have been a number of significant veteran related developments since the last the last newsletter. Some of these have been condensed and listed below.

**Claims Processing** – Contrary to most of the controversy you have heard in the veteran's arena, the biggest negative development is not in health care but in claims processing. We have 149,000 veterans in Maine. About 70,000 of these veterans have applied for benefits at one time or another while 24,000 of these are actually receiving a pension. This compares to 18,000 enrolled in the healthcare program statewide. In fact, to become eligible for the higher categories of the healthcare you must first have an approved service connected claim. Now you ask: "So what?"

Well, here is the rub. The current system is now "developing" claims filed in early February 99 claims (info current at the time of this article). Now VA wants to implement a process called "well grounded claims." This process will have a similar impact on the timely processing of claims; in addition, it will probably reduce the number of claims approved. Well grounded claims basically requires the individual to submit to VA all the necessary documentation to approved a claim at the start of the processing. Those of you who have applied for claims know that the veteran usually does not have all the documentation and VA goes out and looks for health records, etc. This search on the behalf of the veteran will no longer happen. If adequate documentation is not submitted with the initial application, VA will not start the claim. The veteran will have to get witness statements, medical records on their own.

In the past, VA often searched for months and years trying to find all the necessary documentation. Once approved, however, the veteran received back pay to the date of the application. It was not uncommon for us to represent veterans who received over \$100,000 in back pay! This will no longer be possible under "well grounded" claims. Now, what is it that you can do? The VA is now asking for comments on this process. All comments must be made by **VETERAN'S CORNER Continued**

January 31,2000. These comments should be made to the Director, Office of Regulation Management (02D), UDVA, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Room 1154, Washington, DC 20420. Comments should indicate that they are in response to "RIN 2900-AJ44." You can write in response to this article or you can go into one of our 8 offices statewide and they will gladly review the whole process for you. What happens if you do nothing? Well, if you do nothing, we will have a situation as bad or worst than the medical reorganization. When veterans had the opportunity to influence that process, they sat back and did nothing. Now, they are very up set. The same holds true of "well grounded" claims. Remember that you may not need to file a claim now, or you may already have an approved claim, but you may need a claim or an upgrade in the future. These rules will then apply to you. Every veteran should speak out on this process **now.**

**Togus VAMROC** – Well, there is good new and bad news. First, the good news. The USDVA has decided to open another CBOC (Clinic Based Outpatient Center) in the Saco area. This makes 5 CBOC in Maine – Calais, Caribou, Bangor, Rumford and now Saco. These sites have become very popular with the veterans and usually save a trip to Togus for the veteran.

The situation with Togus itself you already know. There will be a layoff (RIF) of personnel amounting to 77 positions. The Director, Jack Sims, says this will probably mean an actual RIF of only 12 employees since most people will retire, move, apply for other jobs internally or accept jobs outside of VA. The positions all come from non-medical arena except for those nurses whom were carried as excess. No doctors are on the reduction list. These reductions were planned some two to three years ago but were delayed by the VISN 1.

**Maine Commission of Women Veterans Conference**  
Maine's Commission on Women Veterans will be holding their first annual statewide conference on issues affecting women veterans on 28-29 April 2000. Invited speakers include Governor Angus S. King, Jr., US Senator Olympia Snowe, LTC (Retired) Robbin Higgins (wife of the USMC colonel murdered by Middle Eastern terrorists), and Alice Raatjes, Assistant Director, Women's Center, USDVA, Washington, DC. Additional details to include location will be announced in February 2000.

**119<sup>th</sup> Legislature Studies** – presently, two Legislative Studies are ending. The first study on veteran's benefits will result in some legislation being submitted for **VETERAN'S CORNER Continued** consideration. This legislation should include increased funds for the Caribou cemetery, increased staffing for this

Bureau, reinstatement of Veteran's Financial Aid and a number of other recommendations. Once I get a complete report I will make copies so veterans can view this document at one of our offices.

The study on Togus continues at this time. No firm recommendations have been made but those that are made will concern the State role in helping Togus.

There are many less significant items not covered in this letter. If you want the latest changes on veteran related issues, please stop by one of our offices.



#### Taps

COL Joseph Campbell  
SFC Joseph Chamberlain  
CPT Douglas Dolan  
CPT Gilbert Hand  
SSG Benjamin Nest  
LTC David Parquette  
SGM Samuel Wyman

#### MISCELLANEOUS

##### Retiree Council Meetings.

The Council meets at 0900 in the TAG conference room, Camp Keyes, Augusta. Any retiree is welcome to attend. Meeting dates for the upcoming year is 15 Feb, 18 Apr, 20 Jun, 15 Aug, 17 Oct and 19 Dec.

##### The Maine Military Historical Society

The Maine Military Historical Society needs retiree support in the daily operation of the museum by helping to conduct tours and in general house-keeping etc. If you are interested and live in the greater Augusta area, contact CW5 Ron Roussel at CP Keyes, telephone 626-4338. Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.

#### MISCELLANEOUS Continued

National Guard Association At a recent National Guard Association Conference all the speakers spoke of the

importance of membership in the association by both active and retired Guard members. When the executive staff of the associations face Congress asking for retiree benefits, Congress wants to know how many retirees they represent...so if you are not a member, either annual of life, now is the time to Join!

For officers and warrant officers, call HQ MENG at 207-626-4311 and ask for Major Alan Tibbetts. He will send you an application for retired life membership. Fill it out and return it with a check payable to NGAUS in the amount of \$125.00. He will provide information on annual membership if so desired Information on how to join the Enlisted Association will be published in the next newsletter

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### Reunion of 703<sup>rd</sup> Arty Bn

A committee has been formed to schedule a reunion of all former 703<sup>rd</sup> Arty Bn members and spouses during the summer of the year 2000. If you are interested in receiving information, please contact BG (Ret) Albert J. White Jr., RR! Box 471, Bath, ME 04530, Tel. No. 442-8734.

#### FOR YOUR INFORMATION

##### 1999 Armed Forces of the U.S. Retiree Appreciation Day

Retiree Appreciation Day hosted by the Maine National Guard and sponsored in cooperation with the New Hampshire and Vermont National Guard, was held at the Augusta Armory on August 14, 1999. Total attendance at the third annual tri-state RAD including retirees, spouses, family members and other interested individuals was over 900. Well over 400 ID cards were issued. Legal services, medical briefings, veterans briefings, veteran counselors and thirty-two vendors provided retirees of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces valuable information, services and advice. Key to the RAD's success was the excellent teamwork by everyone involved in the planning, organization and execution of the total event for the effective support of retirees. Planning has now begun for RAD 2000 to be held in Manchester, NH. See the attachment to this newsletter for further information on RAD 1999.

#### FOR YOUR INFORMATION Continued

##### 112<sup>th</sup> Med Co (Air Amb) in Bosnia

*The following has been provided by SSG Peter C. Beloff of the 112<sup>th</sup>.*

The 112th Med Co(Air Amb) landed in Bosnia on September 1, 1999, after spending about one week at Ft. Benning, GA for mobilization processing. Since the unit accepted the transfer of the medevac mission, they have successfully completed about 12 medevacs. The most serious was the evacuation of two Russian soldiers with severe head injuries involved in a ground vehicle accident. The chain of command of Task Force Med Eagle in Bosnia has been impressed with the 112th's response time and the unit has earned an honorable mention in the "Stars and Stripes" magazine. Most recently, the Department of Defense has authorized a draw down of forces in Bosnia which has had a direct effect on the 112th. Eighteen individuals and three UH-60 Blackhawk aircraft will return to Maine around the 15th of December. More information can be found on the unit's website at [www.112medevac.org](http://www.112medevac.org), which also has links to other informative web pages.

### **Retired Services Office**

A Retired Services Office, manned by volunteer retirees from all services, has been established at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to assist military retirees from all service branches. The RSO is located in Building 22, the same building as the base library and Resource Center. Office hours are Tues. and Wed. from 1000-1400 hours. For more information, call (207) 438-1868. Captain John Wheeler, MSC, USN/Ret. is the RSO Director.

### **Uniforms For Retired Personnel**

According to the Pentagon, we may wear our uniforms and accouterments after retirement in the following situations.

*General:* Retired officers and enlisted personnel who are not on active duty, may wear the uniform, insignia and qualifications corresponding to the rank indicated on the retired list.

Grooming standards in appropriate regulations must be complied with. The uniform is authorized at ceremonies or official functions when dictated by the dignity of the occasion and good taste. For example, wearing of a uniform is appropriate for memorial services, weddings, funerals, balls, patriotic or military parades, ceremonies in which any active or reserve United States military unit is participating, and meetings or functions of military associations. If retired personnel are ordered to active duty, they wear the uniform prescribed for officers and enlisted

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION Continued**

personnel of active duty. The uniform is NOT authorized in connection with personal enterprises, business activities, or while attending or participating in any demonstration, assembly or activity for the purpose of furthering personal

pr partisan views on political, social, economic or religious issues.

Wear of awards on civilian clothes. You may wear miniature medals and miniature breast insignia on civilian evening dress (white tie) and civilian dinner dress (black tie) in the same manner as for dress dinner jackets.

The Medal of Honor, for which there is no miniature, may be worn with civilian evening dress and civilian dinner dress in the same manner as for military uniforms.

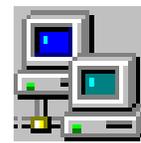
You may wear miniature replicas of ribbons made in the form of lapel buttons made in rosette form, on the left lapel of civilian clothes except civilian evening dress and civilian dinner dress. You may wear miniature distinguished marksmanship and pistol badges as a lapel pin or as part of a tie clasp on civilian clothing. You may wear honorable discharge and service buttons on the left lapel of civilian clothes, except civilian evening dress. (With thanks to TROA North Carolina Council)

### **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. We want to be sure that all retirees will get their newsletter and other information

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



**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.

COL David Blair - [dhblair@mint.net](mailto:dhblair@mint.net)

BG Nathan Grass - [ngrass@ainop.com](mailto:ngrass@ainop.com)

### **Retiree E-Mail Addresses Continued**

SFC Peter Howland - [moat@juno.com](mailto:moat@juno.com)

LTC James Laflin – [james.laflin@state.me.us](mailto:james.laflin@state.me.us)  
 BG Donald Marden – [dhmarden@mint.net](mailto:dhmarden@mint.net)  
 COL Gautrey Musk – [gmusk@gwi.net](mailto:gmusk@gwi.net)  
 SFC Gary Owen – [gsowen@mint.net](mailto:gsowen@mint.net)  
 1SG Allen Perkins – [almar@cybertours.com](mailto:almar@cybertours.com)  
 SFC Dean Soule – [deano@clinic.net](mailto:deano@clinic.net)  
 MAJ Richard West – [major063@aol.com](mailto:major063@aol.com)  
 BG Edwin Whitney – [edwhitney@clinic.net](mailto:edwhitney@clinic.net)

James Laflin  
 Martin Asdourian  
 Donald Laflin  
 Dean Soule  
 Edward Davis  
 David Blair  
 Clifton Johnson



**RETIREE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Romain Savoie  
 Nathan Grass  
 Gautrey Musk  
 Robert Weymouth  
 Albert White, Jr.  
 Douglas Welsh, Jr.