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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.

**COMMENTARY** This is the twenty-seventh 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](mailto: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/>*

### **- WANTED -**

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

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

***Duties include researching informative information and articles that would be of an interest to the retiree and spouse and formatting it in a newsletter. Mailing of the newsletter would not be the responsibility of the Editor. The newsletter is published three times a year that covers January to April; May to August and September to December.***

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

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

***Tricare Retiree Dental Program Eligibility Includes “Gray Area” Retirees:***

Eligibility for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) 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.

Premiums for the TRDP are regionally based on the primary enrollee’s residence ZIP code. Title 10 of the United States Code, Section 1076c mandates that monthly premiums for the TRDP be deducted automatically from retired pay through one of six discretionary allotments. However, “gray area” retired Reservists who are younger than age 60 and who enroll in the program are naturally exempt from the mandatory government deduction, so alternative payment arrangements such as direct billing or EFT will be made.

Today, over 791,000 retired members of the uniformed services, Medal of Honor recipients, unremarried surviving spouses, and their family members are enjoying comprehensive, affordable benefits under the TRDP. Enrollees in the TRDP can choose any licensed dentist within the TRDP service area or can select from a network of over 80,000 dentist locations nationwide. The TRDP service area includes all 50 United States as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Canada.

Retired Reservists and Guard members, including “gray area” retirees, who would like more information about the TRDP

can visit the web site at [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org) or call the contract administrator, Delta Dental of California, at 1 (888) 838-8737 for a complete TRDP enrollment packet.

**TRICARE Prime and Non-Medical Attendant Travel Entitlements**

Under provisions of the 2001 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), TRICARE Prime beneficiaries referred by their primary care manager (PCM) for services at a location more than 100 miles from their PCM may be eligible to have their "reasonable travel expenses" reimbursed by TRICARE. The travel reimbursement entitlement is retroactive to Oct. 30, 2000. The TRICARE Prime travel entitlement is available to non-active duty TRICARE Prime enrollees and TRICARE Prime Remote family members when they are referred for specialty care more than 100 miles from the PCM location.

Beneficiaries must have a valid referral and travel orders from a TRICARE representative at the military treatment facility (MTF) where they are enrolled or from the TRICARE Regional Offices (TROs) if their PCM is a TRICARE network provider. This entitlement does not apply to expenses experienced by active duty uniformed services members, active duty family members residing with their sponsors overseas, or travel costs of beneficiaries referred under Department of Defense (DoD) specialized treatment programs, which are reimbursed by other travel entitlements. For more information about the TRICARE Prime travel entitlement, please contact the local MTF or TRO beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator (BCAC) or travel POC. Telephone numbers and addresses for BCACs are available on the TRICARE Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil/tricare/beneficiary/BCACDirectory.htm](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/tricare/beneficiary/BCACDirectory.htm)

To view a full fact sheet on the TRICARE Web site, please visit <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet.cfm?id=181>

**TRICARE Online Services**

If only doctors made house calls. Fortunately, your healthcare program does. TRICARE has launched a Web site with new services and helpful links. TRICARE Online (TOL) provides personalized services for TRICARE beneficiaries worldwide, in conjunction with local military treatment facilities (MTFs). It's important to note that TOL is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Acknowledgement of a detailed medical disclaimer is required for use of the site. The site features include online enrollment and appointments, information on claims (i.e., status of payments and copies of explanations of benefits for claims), general health info, and more. For more information, see

[http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,TRICARE\\_Online,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,TRICARE_Online,00.html).

For more on TRICARE, go to

<http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,30822--1,00.html>

### **Using TA, DANTES And GI Bill Benefits**

One of the benefits of serving in the armed forces is the range of educational opportunities available both while serving and after separation. More and more programs are being designed to accommodate active military personnel and working adults including retirees and veterans. If you are interested in pursuing your undergraduate or graduate degree, you can request free information on various online and offline programs at Military.com. To request information, go to the Education Center: <http://www.military.com/Education/Lead1>

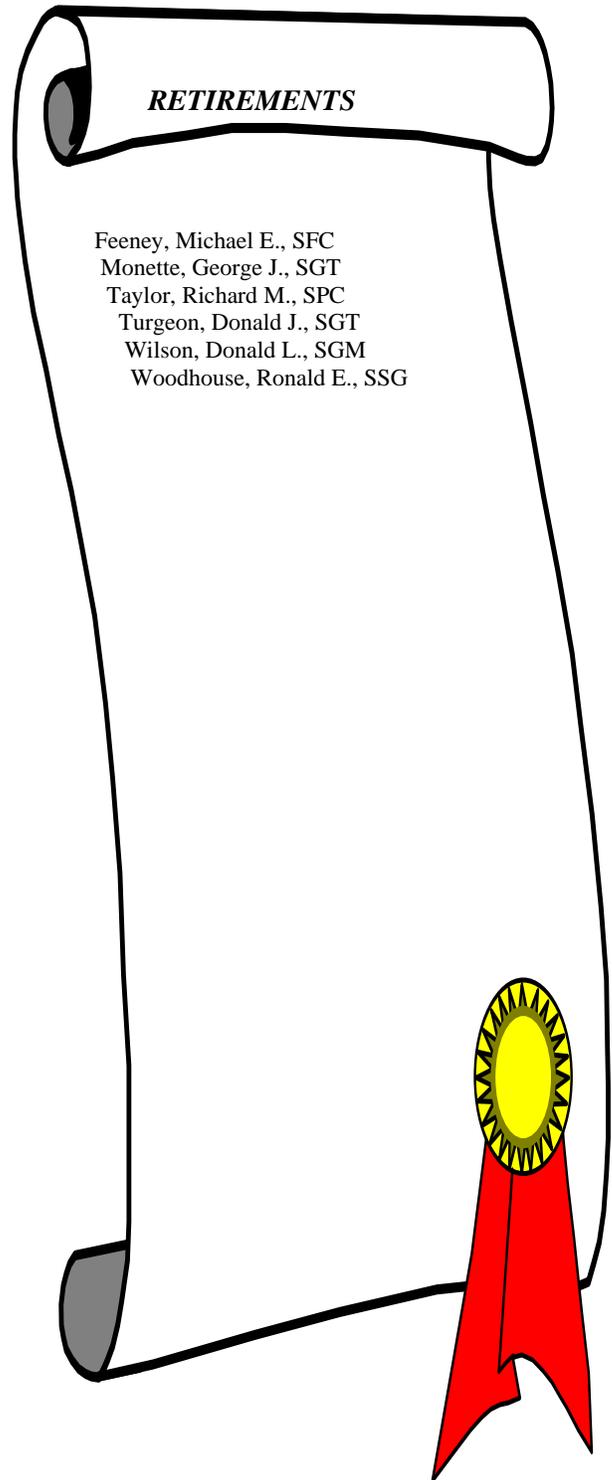
### **Medicare Part B Enrollment Plan Miscarries**

Under the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, military beneficiaries eligible for Medicare Part B who had not enrolled were to be allowed to enroll during 2004 with no late enrollment penalty in order to be eligible for Tricare for Life. In a two-part plan, the Defense Department would first send them a letter explaining why they needed Medicare Part B, then Medicare would send a second letter telling them how to enroll. The second letter never reached some 30,000 eligible beneficiaries, who consequently are not enrolled in Part B. Those individuals now may enroll without penalty during 2005 through their local Social Security Office, or by contacting Social Security at 1-800-772-1213, or [www.ssa.gov/legislation/](http://www.ssa.gov/legislation/). For additional information, visit [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil) or contact Tricare's Medicare-eligible claim processor at (866) 773-0404.

## **\*\*TRANSITIONS\*\***

### **RETIREMENTS**

Feeney, Michael E., SFC  
Monette, George J., SGT  
Taylor, Richard M., SPC  
Turgeon, Donald J., SGT  
Wilson, Donald L., SGM  
Woodhouse, Ronald E., SSG



*(\*\*Any names that are not on this list, was not done intentionally, please advise.) Because of a major migration process to a new domain that has taken place has disallowed me to provide a complete listing of names to the retirement list.*



**\*\*TAPS\*\***

- Staff Sergeant (Ret) Herbert Judkins*
- First Sergeant (Ret) Charles (Ron) Sirois*
- SGT (Ret) Roland F. Whittier*
- SFC(Ret) Hartley H. Mowatt Sr*
- MAJ (Ret) John C. Rioux*

*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](mailto:dean.soule@me.ngb.army.mil)*



*Memorial Services for Specialist Thomas Dostie and Sergeant Lynn Poulin was held at Base Camp, Marez, Mosul on December 24, 2004.*

*The following tribute was sent by Lieutenant Colonel Jansen to the unit's family in Maine in light of the unit's recent losses:*

*Dear Families and Friends,*

*On behalf of the entire 133d Engineer Battalion I report to you with a heavy heart and deep sadness. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December we lost two wonderful people and role model soldiers, SGT Lynn Poulin and SPC Thomas Dostie who died in a cowardice attack here at our main Forward Operating Base, Camp Marez located in Mosul Iraq. Our thoughts and prayers are focused with their families. We will miss these soldiers dearly, they will be forever etched in our hearts and we will never forget the ultimate sacrifice they made for his country.*

*I talked to both the Governor of the State of Maine and BG Libby the Adjutant General and they have both pledged their full support to the families of Lynn and Thomas and I know*

*that all of the Maine National Guard personnel, the entire state of Maine and especial the soldiers and families of the 133d will be their for them in their time of need.*

*I am pleased to pass onto you that the 10 soldiers that were wounded during the same incident here are doing well. Your loved ones, members of this Battalion are amazing, they have accomplished so much here working together. It is a true honor and a privilege to serve with them here in Iraq. They are strong and they are looking after each other the very best they can. Their response at the scene of the incident was extraordinary and I know because of their actions many more lives were saved.*

*I know that the road ahead will be difficult for the families of the fallen soldiers as well as every soldier and family member associated with the Battalion. Something was lost in all of here and there is need for a lot of healing. The challenges are even greater with the the holiday season, but we must all find a way to move on. Over here we will continue with our mission and I believe the best way to honor of fallen soldiers is see this through and make sure that there lives were not lost in vain.*

*As a result of this deployment I know one thing .... The freedom that we all enjoy in America is worth defending, it is special. Here we have seen the other side and that is not an option for the United States. Unfortunately to keep our treasured way of life there is a high price. I for one will be forever in the debt for those who have given all.*

*"TO THE LAST MAN"*

*LTC J.J. Jansen*

*"Chamberlain 6"*

**Volunteers Welcome In Helping To Conduct Military Funeral Honors:**

The POC for this is:  
**Alex Clifford**  
**MSG, MEARNNG**  
**(207) 626-4406**



All volunteers are welcome to be AP3 certified and placed on the resource list in helping to conduct Military Funeral Honors, honoring those who served. The rendering of Military Funeral Honors is a way to show the Nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. Funds are available to compensate certain categories of retirees and buglers. The process involves training by a Military Service to ensure a civic organization and / or retirees participating in rendering mil funeral honors can perform honors to standard. The

training and certification are done here at Camp Keyes by one of our Honor Guard members and takes just a few hours depending on the individuals. After the standard of training is met, a certificate and Mil Funeral Honors pin like the one shown is provided to the individual(s). In addition, a video is provided for refresher training down the road.

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

### **Death Notification Procedure for Retirees:**

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

### **Provide the following data in your notification:**

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

### **Additional actions to take are:**

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

### **Succession Plan**

In your will, you'll name an executor to act as quarterback for your estate. In some states, an executor is known as an administrator or personal representative.

After your death, it will be up to your executor to inventory your possessions, pay bills, file tax returns, and make sure your assets are distributed according to your instructions. Therefore, you should give careful thought to choosing an executor.

You might not want to name your spouse as an executor because he or she probably will be too upset to act effectively. A grown son or daughter might be a better choice. If that's not practical, you can name a professional advisor, such as an accountant or an attorney. For professionals, a fee schedule should be worked out in advance.

Whomever you choose as your executor, make sure you get his or her consent to serve before naming someone in your will. You should line up a backup executor, too, in case your original selection becomes unable to serve.

Then, go over everything with your executor. Your executor should know what your assets are and where the paperwork can be found.

### **Someone To Trust**

Every trust needs a trustee to assume responsibility for handling trust assets. Your choices include:

- Individual trustee: A friend or relative probably will be familiar with the parties involved and may well make the decisions desired by you, the trust creator.
- Institutional trustee: Your local bank or trust company might have the resources to manage money and the staying power to handle long-term trusts.

To get the best of both worlds, consider naming an institution and an individual as co-trustees. You may get financial expertise and personal attention. If discretionary decisions are permitted, you can direct that both co-trustees must agree.

Putting "trustee removal" powers into a trust can reduce the risk that a trustee will prove to be unsatisfactory. A majority vote of adult income beneficiaries may be sufficient for a substitution; the new trustee or co-trustee must be an unrelated person or institution.

Whenever you name an individual as trustee or co-trustee, be sure the person is qualified to do the job, then get his or her consent. Name a successor trustee, too, in case your first choice is unable or unwilling to serve.

**\*\*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](http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/rentals).

**\*\*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

**‘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 is 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					
112 <sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Bangor	Operations Enduring Freedom	2	Fort Drum, New York	Medical Hold					
JFHQ Medic	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Mosul, Iraq w/118 <sup>th</sup> Med Bn, CTARNG	Deployed					
JFHQ Logistics Officer	Operation Enduring Freedom	1	Mazar E Sharif, Afghanistan	Deployed					
Maine Army National Guard Nurse 133 <sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy)	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Hanscom AFB, MA	On Station					
	Operations Iraqi Freedom	11	Kuwait/Iraq	Deployed					
	Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Ft. Belvoir, VA	On Station					
52 <sup>nd</sup> Troop Command									
JFHQ Mobilization Readiness Officer B Co. 3-172 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry BN, Combat Engineer	Operation Iraqi Freedom	1	Baghdad, Iraq	Deployed					
286 <sup>th</sup> QM BN	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Ft. Irwin, CA	On Station					
1136 <sup>th</sup> Trans Co.	Operation Noble Eagle	1	Ft. Irwin, CA	On Station					
Maine Army National Guard Soldiers Co B, 3 <sup>rd</sup> BT	Security	11	Camp Keyes; Army Aviation Support Facility/Augusta	On Station					
172 <sup>nd</sup> Inf Mtn Brewer	Base Security	6	Air National Guard Base, Bangor, Maine	Returned from Demob Station Ft Drum					
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>678</b>							

### **152<sup>nd</sup> Maintenance Company Receives Mob Order**

As previously reported, the 152<sup>nd</sup> Maintenance Company received a mobilization order on, or about, December 27, 2004. The entire Company has been notified but less than 150 are expected to be activated. The unit will report to its mobilization station at Ft. Bliss, Texas, on, or about February 1, 2005. The ultimate destination is expected to be Iraq and/or Kuwait. The unit is being processed for deployment at Camp Keyes on January 8 and 9, 2005. Press will cover this event.

### **Retiree Shoulder Sleeve Insignia:**

For the retiree that may have to wear his/her uniform should know that they are authorized to wear the shoulder sleeve insignia for U.S. Army Retirees on the left shoulder. (In accordance with AR 670-1, Para. 30-3) The insignia consists of a white cloth disc with a blue border, and an inner white disc with a red border, which bears a blue and white adaptation of the coat of arms of the United States. The outer disk that surrounds the coat of arms contains the inscription "UNITED STATES ARMY" in red letters at the top and the word "RETIRED" in blue letters at the bottom.



This is the same insignia that I use in the newsletter for the section that lists the Retiree Council Members.

You can obtain the patch through the PX. They are sold in a package of 2 at a cost of \$4.60.

### **Special Compensation to Purple Heart Recipients**

The Combat Military Medically Retired Veteran's Fairness Act of 2004 (HR 4637) authorizes the payment of special compensation to members of the Armed Forces retired due to disability with less than 20 years of active service who were awarded the Purple Heart. The act states that such payments shall be made without regard to special rules applicable to other disability retirees which require offsetting reductions.

To learn more about HR 4637, go to <http://vote.military.com/military/issues/bills/?bill=6778421>

How do you feel about this bill? Contact your representatives NOW!

[http://vote.military.com/military/mail/oneclick\\_compose/?alertid=6778431](http://vote.military.com/military/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=6778431)

### **VA Ends Laser Eye Surgery by Optometrists**

WASHINGTON (December 17, 2004) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has ended a five-month-old policy that permitted optometrists to perform laser eye surgery at its health care facilities under the supervision of ophthalmologists.

"The decision I made to rescind optometrists' privileges is a reluctant one," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "Since experts could not come up with an implementation plan agreeable to both specialties, I chose this path to protect the interest of veterans."

Traditionally, ophthalmologists perform eye surgery, while optometrists conduct visual examinations.

In VA, health professionals can only perform services identified by professional licenses issued by each state. Oklahoma is the only state in the nation that licenses properly trained optometrists in their state to perform laser eye surgery.

In August, VA began permitting optometrists with licenses authorizing laser eye surgery to perform those procedures under the supervision of an ophthalmologist. However, a VA panel with representatives from both professions has been unable to reach an agreement on how this supervision would actually take place.

VA currently operates 157 hospitals, 134 nursing homes, 42 residential rehabilitation treatment programs, and 862 outpatient clinics. The new policy will take effect immediately at all facilities providing laser eye surgery.

### **Armored Humvee Production To Rise 22 Percent**

On Dec. 10, the Defense Department asked Armor Holdings to increase production of up-armored Humvees from 450 units per month to 550. The company said it expected its Ohio plant to reach the new rate of production "by no later than the February-March time frame." Concerns about armor protection for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan hit the front burner on Dec. 8 when Army Spc. Thomas Jerry Wilson from the Tennessee National Guard, en route to Iraq, complained to Defense secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld that they were going to war without enough armored protection. "Why do we soldiers have to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to up armor our vehicles?"

Wilson demanded. The Army also is producing armor kits at seven depots for use in Iraq.

### **The Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program**

The Army National Guard has been tasked to contribute significant resources to the Global War on Terrorism. Many

of these resources include low density, high demand military occupational specialties such as military intelligence. In order to meet the increasing demands on its military intelligence force structure, the Army National Guard authorized the creation of the Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program. A component of the Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program is the Augmentation Management Platform (AMP).

The purpose of the AMP is to identify individuals who were earlier awarded a military intelligence MOS that is currently in demand. Those individuals can qualify for the AMP if they are not currently a member of the ARNG military intelligence force structure and they reside at least 150 miles from an ARNG military intelligence unit. AMP allows soldiers to continue with their military intelligence careers despite the geographical distance between the soldiers and their units. It also allows the ARNG military intelligence force structure to continue to take advantage of those MI skills so necessary to the current ARNG mission.

AMP can be contacted at COMM: (703) 607-9554, DSN: 327-9554 or TOLL FREE: 1-888-688-9853; email: [GOMIRIP@ngb.army.mil](mailto:GOMIRIP@ngb.army.mil); website: [www.GOMIRIP.com](http://www.GOMIRIP.com), or [www.ngb.army.mil/GOMIRIP](http://www.ngb.army.mil/GOMIRIP)

### **Army Reserve Chief Says Force Broken**

Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve, has written a memo to Army chief of staff, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker stating that the Army Reserve "is rapidly degenerating into a broken force" because of the Reserve's inability to meet mission requirements associated with Iraq and Afghanistan and to reset and regenerate its forces for follow-on and future missions. Of the 200,366 soldiers in the Army Reserve, he wrote, only about 37,515 who are available for missions have not yet been deployed. Helmly's recommendations: authority to involuntarily reassign soldiers from the Individual Ready Reserve to Army Reserve; either call "nonparticipant" soldiers to active duty or discharge them; extend mandatory retirement dates for reserve officers; eliminate the requirement that Army Reserve officers retire at their 20th year of active service; and use volunteer retirees as a first priority to satisfy some staff requirements.

### **Army RC Re-Callup Restrictions Questioned**

The Army is considering asking the Defense Department to change National Guard and Reserve policy that currently limits active duty tours to an accumulated amount of 24 months, said a senior Army official on Jan. 6. The change would authorize repeated call-ups of Reserve Component members for up to two years at a time. Under current policy, if, for example, a Guard or Reservist was mobilized for six

months after the 9/11 attacks, and again for nine months in Afghanistan, the accumulated 15 months would prohibit a callup for a standard 12-month tour in Iraq. A new policy of periodic 12- or 24-month activations would make such individuals available. It also would make all RC personnel subject to recurring recalls after a specified time between active duty periods.

### **Why Does The Army Wear Flags Backward?**

ARLINGTON, Va. - Why do American soldiers wear the U.S. flag insignia "backward" on the right shoulder of their utility uniforms, with the canton (the correct name for the rectangle with the stars) on an observer's right?

It's a question that soldiers hear frequently as they travel through civilian airports, or talk to members of other services.

And it does look "wrong," because U.S. federal code calls for the canton to always be positioned to an observer's left.

The soldiers aren't wrong, however, and neither are their tailors, Lt. Col. Stanley Heath, an Army spokesman, explained in a Friday telephone interview.

The Army actually has two authorized flag patches, one worn on the left shoulder, with the canton facing left, and another "reverse field" patch worn on the right, with the canton facing right.

The two different orientations are mandated because Army regulations call for the flag "to be worn so that to observers, it looks as if the flag is flying against a breeze," Heath said.

What does a stiff wind have to do with this custom?

In fact, the rule is a nod to the U.S. Army's early history, when wars were fought as a series of carefully choreographed battles - two armies meeting on a field, clashing head-on until one side emerged victorious.

In those battles, both mounted cavalry and infantry units would always designate one soldier as "standard bearer," to carry the Colors into the fight.

As the standard bearer charged, his rapid forward momentum would cause the flag to stream back.

And since the Stars and Stripes are mounted with the canton closest to the pole, that section would stay to the right, while the stripes flew leftward.

Only if the American soldiers were running away from the fight would an enemy see the stripes to the right and the canton to the left.

And that's why soldiers wear their flag patches "backward" - because retreat in battle, as any soldier will tell you, is not the Army way.

Source: By Lisa Burgess, [Stars and Stripes](#), European Edition February 23, 2004

### *The Straight Scoop from Charlie Daniels*

I've just returned from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Naval Air Station base where we did three shows for the troops and toured several locations around the post visiting with some of the finest military personnel on planet earth. The kids seemed to really enjoy the shows and especially liked "This Ain't No Rag, It's A Flag" and "In America". We had a great time with them.

We saw Camp X-Ray, where the Taliban detainees are being held only from a distance, but I picked up a lot of what's going on there from talking with a lot of different people.

The truth of the matter is that this operation is under a microscope. The Red Cross has an on site presence there and watches everything that goes on very closely. The media is not telling you the whole truth about what's going on over there. The truth is that these scum bags are not only being treated humanely, but they are probably better off healthwise and medically than they've ever been in their lives. They are fed well, able to take showers and receive state of the art medical care. And have their own Moslem chaplain. I saw several of them in a field hospital ward where they were being treated in a state of the art medical facility. Now let's talk about the way they treat our people. First of all, they have to be watched constantly. These people are committed and wanton murderers who are willing to die just to kill someone else. One of the doctors told me that when they had Taliban in the hospital the staff had to really be careful with needles, pens and anything else which could possibly be used as a weapon. They also throw their excrement and urine on the troops who are guarding them. And our guys and gals have shown great restraint in not retaliating. We are spending over a million dollars a day maintaining and guarding these nasty killers and anyone who wants to see them brought to the U.S.A. for trial is either out of their heads or a lawyer looking for money and notoriety. Or both.

I wish that the media and the Red Cross and all the rest of the people who are so worried about these criminals would realize that this is not a troop of errant Boy Scouts. These are killers of the worst kind. They don't need protection from us, we need protection from them. If you don't get anything else out of this soapbox, please try to realize that when you see news coverage much of the time you're not getting the whole story, but an account filtered through a liberal mindset with an agenda.

We have two fights on our hands, the war against terror and the one against the loudmouthed lawyers and left wing media who would sap the strength from the American public by making us believe that we're losing the war or doing something wrong in fighting it. Remember these are the same people who told us that Saddam Hussein's Republican guard was going to be an all but invincible enemy and that our smart

bombs and other weapons were not really as good as the military said that they were.

They also took up for Bill Clinton while he was cavorting around the Oval office with Monica Lewinsky while the terrorists were gaining strength and bombing our Embassies and dragging the bodies of dead American heroes around the dusty streets of Somalia. It's a shame that we can't have an unbiased media who would just report the truth and let us make up our own minds.

Here I must commend Fox News for presenting both sides much better than the other networks. They are leaving the other cable networks in the dust. People like being told the truth.

Our military not only needs but deserves our support. Let's give it to them.

The next time you read a media account about the bad treatment of the Taliban in Cuba, remember what I told you. Been there done that.

*Footnote:* I got an e-mail from a rather irate first cousin of mine the other day who has a daughter who's a lawyer and she seemed to think that I was painting all lawyers with the same brush. Please understand that I'm not doing that at all. That would be like saying that all musicians were drug addicts. There are a lot of good and honest attorneys out there. I happen to have one of them. But it seems that they never get any airtime. It's always the radicals who get their opinions heard, who fight the idea of the military tribunals and cites The Constitution and the integrity of America as their source of justifying their opinions. Well, first of all The Constitution says "We the people of the United States", it doesn't mention any other country.

And secondly as far as integrity is concerned, I don't think some of these folks would know integrity if it bit them in the posterior.

What do you think? God Bless America

*Charlie Daniels*

*P.S. The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail – not his tongue.*

### *Funding On Tap for Injured Troop Rehab*

Defense Department officials have startup funding for a new initiative for service members injured in the war on terrorism, said John M. Molino, acting principal deputy for equal opportunity, Dec. 7. "We're looking at possibilities for internships and other types of trial employment," said Molino. "We intend for every injured or disabled veteran to have as many opportunities as he or she needs to achieve his or her maximum potential on active duty or in our civilian work force," said Molino. "We are here for the people who fight to protect us. " In addition, DoD will continue using the

Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, Molino said. He also encouraged them to participate in the department's "e-mentoring" program for disabled students. "The mentors are volunteers from our civilian work force and the military services," he said.

### **VA Funds New Limb-Loss Research**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 16, 2004) -- Creating "biohybrid" limbs that use human tissue and space-age technology to assist amputees is the major goal of a \$7.2 million grant by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a special research center in Rhode Island.

"Helping our combat-disabled veterans recover from their wounds is among VA's highest responsibilities," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "This grant allows us to bring cutting-edge science to help these wounded heroes."

The five-year grant will fund the new Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine, to be operated jointly by the Providence VA Medical Center, Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Scientists hope to create "biohybrid" limbs that will use regenerated tissue, lengthened bone, titanium prosthetics and implantable sensors that allow amputees to use nerves and brain signals to move arms or legs. The aim is to give amputees -- particularly war veterans -- better mobility and control of their limbs and to reduce the discomfort and infections common with current prosthetics.

According to a recent Senate report, body armor and improvements in casualty care have contributed to the lowest "died-of-wounds" rate in military history. However, the report says more surviving soldiers from the Iraq war have lost arms or legs. Historically, 3 percent of soldiers wounded in action required some amputation, but the number in Iraq is 6 percent, according to the report.

"VA has been a leader in prosthetics and limb-loss research throughout its history," said Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's acting under secretary for health. "This new center continues that tradition. It will help veterans and all Americans who have lost limbs to have greater mobility, greater function and greater independence than previously possible."

The new research center will be located at the Providence VA Medical Center. Research and clinical care will take place at the medical center, Brown, MIT and Rhode Island Hospital.

Dr. Roy Aaron, director of the center at VA Providence, said biohybrid limbs will maximize amputees' existing tissue and bone. Surgery that lengthens bone will be coupled with tissue engineering techniques to speed healing. The goal is to make bones longer to improve the fit of prosthetics and make bones stronger to reduce fractures.

Researchers will use tissue engineering to further restore limbs. Research also will focus on joining biological tissue with high-tech prosthetics. Researchers will try to improve a process known as "osseointegration," in which a titanium bolt is attached to an amputee's existing limb, allowing the attachment of prosthetics. These researchers will try to grow skin that will fuse with the titanium, forming a natural seal around the bolts to reduce the rate of infection.

"While many of the techniques we're using are being tested across the country, this project marks the first time they will be pulled together to improve care for amputees, particularly veterans," Aaron said.

Anyone who has lost a limb -- due to injuries or diseases such as diabetes and bone cancer -- will be eligible to enroll in clinical trials.

While the project's ultimate aim is to build biohybrid limbs, experiments may yield advances that could be used for many clinical applications. For example, cartilage regeneration could prevent the need for total knee and hip replacement surgeries. A skin seal could improve the safety of catheters, stents and other medical devices prone to infection. And robotic knees and ankles could help people immobilized by stroke, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis.

### **28,000 Retirees Still Awaiting CRDP Decision**

In December, 2003, the Congress set a 10-year phase-in of Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (formerly called "concurrent receipt") for military retirees with disabilities rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs at 50 percent or more. In October, 2004, lawmakers approved a full phase-in on Jan. 1, 2005, for retirees who are 100 percent disabled. Still at issue is whether the new law applies to members who are rated at less than 100 percent disabled but are drawing VA compensation at the 100 percent level because the VA has declared them unemployable.

Defense Department lawyers believe the law also applies to that group, but they are waiting for the Office of Management and Budget to weigh in. If the decision is made to pay the 28,000 retirees who are affected, their payments will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2005.

### **VA Distributes 2005 Insurance Dividends**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that during 2005 it will distribute more than \$449 million in dividends to 1.4 million active policyholders of veterans' life insurance. Veterans will automatically receive payments on the anniversary date of their policies, with the specific dividend amount varying according to age, type of insurance, and length of time the policy has been in force. Dividends cover only veterans with government life insurance policies who served between 1917 and 1956, and whose policies have been kept in force. Inaccurate notices periodically surface

in the veterans community suggesting that those who have not maintained insurance are eligible for a special dividend if they contact VA, but this is false says the VA. Veterans with questions may call the VA Insurance toll-free number at 1-800-669-8477, may send an e-mail to [VAinsurance@vba.va.gov](mailto:VAinsurance@vba.va.gov), or may visit [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov).

### **New Law Allows Higher Limits In VA Home Loan Program**

WASHINGTON (January 13, 2005) - Legislation recently signed by President Bush makes home ownership more affordable for many veterans.

Changes under the law mean veterans will be able to get no-downpayment loans of up to \$359,700. The previous ceiling was \$240,000.

"Now, more than ever, veterans will be able to make their dreams of home ownership a reality," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing part of the loan, veterans can receive a good interest rate without having to make a downpayment.

The changes took effect Dec. 10 when President Bush signed into law the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. The law also allows for loan limits to keep pace with rising home values.

The new law allows VA to guarantee one-year adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) and it extends, through 2008, VA's "hybrid ARM program," which allows veterans to lock in a favorable interest rate for at least three years.

More information about VA home loan benefits is available on the Web at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov> <<http://www.homeloans.va.gov/>> .

### **Tax-Free Fortnight**

If you own a second home, you probably can deduct your outlays for mortgage interest and property taxes, just as you can for your primary residence. Moreover, you can rent a home--including a vacation home--for up to 14 days a year without having to report any rental income. (You can't claim rental-related tax deductions, though.)

This might be a lucrative opportunity if you own a place near a major sports event. Also, resort homes may command high rents, tax-free, for summer fun or winter sports. However, if you go over the 14-day mark, all the rental income must be reported.

So it probably doesn't make sense to rent your vacation home for, say, 15 or 16 days a year.

### **No Taxes, No Losses**

With a variable annuity, no tax is due on investment income, as long as you keep your money inside the annuity contract. In recent years, so-called living benefits have been added to most variable annuities, in one of these categories: Guaranteed minimum accumulation benefit (GMAB). This is a guarantee that the annuity's value will attain a certain minimum amount, which is not tied to annuitization. You might have to wait five years or longer to qualify for the guarantee.

Guaranteed minimum income benefit (GMIB). Here, if an investor elects to annuitize a contract with the issuer, a minimum amount will be applied to the purchase of the annuity, even if the variable annuity's investment accounts have not performed as well as the guaranteed minimum return.

For example, you might receive a guarantee that your initial investment will increase by at least 5 percent a year. After 10 years or longer, the contract can be annuitized (turned into a stream of payments), based on the actual contract value or the guaranteed rate, whichever is greater.

Guaranteed minimum withdrawal benefit (GMWB). This feature allows investors to take withdrawals over a period of years so they will at least receive a return of their investment. You might be entitled to withdraw 7 percent of your original investment per year until you have gotten back all of your outlays, even if your investment accounts have fallen. Generally, such guarantees require that you keep a variable annuity with the same company rather than exchange for an annuity from another issuer.

### **Effective Easements**

To get tax benefits from a conservation easement, you donate property development rights to an appropriate charity, usually a local government or preservation group.

This donation reduces the value of your property, so it can be taken as a charitable deduction on Schedule A of your tax return.

Suppose you own 10 acres of land behind your home. In your area, development of condos is proceeding at a rapid pace. To preserve open space and prevent over-development, you donate an easement to a local land trust. This easement, binding on you and on future owners, prohibits further development on the property.

Say a qualified, unrelated party appraises your property as being worth \$500,000 million before the easement was donated.

After the easement, your property is worth only \$400,000, because development potential have been reduced. Thus, your property has lost \$100,000 in value.

If so, the \$100,000 loss of value can be taken as a charitable deduction. Tax code rules restrict the amount of donations you can deduct in one year but unused deductions can be taken over the next five years.

### **Cost and Effect**

Variable annuity costs are higher than mutual fund expense ratios. In return for the higher cost, investors receive some advantages mutual funds can't offer:

Investment income inside a variable annuity is not taxed until withdrawal. Mutual fund investments generally throw off taxable income each year, which can lead to higher income taxes, exposure to the alternative minimum tax (AMT), and taxation of Social Security benefits.

With a variable annuity, there are no minimum distribution rules, no limits on the amount that can be contributed, and no medical underwriting. If you wish, you can defer taxes indefinitely on investment income. When the account passes to your beneficiaries, they can choose to stretch out taxable withdrawals over their life expectancy.

Variable annuities don't have to go through probate. They pass directly to named beneficiaries.

Variable annuities offer a return-of-investment guarantee to beneficiaries, even if the investment accounts have lost money.

In recent years, various "ratchets" have been introduced, to increase the death benefit above the initial investment amount.

In the past few years, "living benefits" have been added to variable annuities. These living benefits offer a money-back guarantee, or even a guaranteed return.

There is a cost for these guarantees (usually an addition to annual charges) as well as some conditions. Investors might be required to keep their money with the same issuer for a certain number of years.

### **Medicare Costs Rise**

The monthly premium paid by those receiving Medicare Part B (primarily physicians' services) benefits are rising to \$78.20 from \$66.60. The Part B annual deductible will rise to \$110, the Part A (hospital insurance) deductible is rising to \$912 for the first 50 days per benefit period and the coinsurance requirements is increasing to \$228 a day for the 61st-90th day per benefit period and to \$456 a day above 90 days. Those new figures represent increases of several dollars each.

### **Retiree COLA Paid Out**

Retirees are getting their annual cost-of-living adjustments with their January checks (or direct deposits, for those who get their payments that way). The COLA for those retired under the CSRS annuity system will be 2.7 percent. FERS retirees get the 2.7 percent adjustment on their Social Security benefits, as well (some CSRS retirees also get Social Security benefits through employment outside the government) while they will get 2 percent on the civil service portion of their annuities, assuming they are eligible for COLAs (generally FERS does not pay COLAs under age 62). Those who retired in calendar year 2004 should note that COLAs are pro-rated according to the month in which their annuities started.

### **Military Exchanges Facing Transformation**

The Unified Exchange Task Force, headed by retired Air Force Maj. Gen. C.J. Wax, was originally tasked to consider consolidating the three exchange systems. Problems surfaced which caused the UETF to refocus only on consolidation of the organizations' finance and accounting, human resources, information technology, logistics and nonretail procurement systems. New factors, however, have surfaced, said General Wax. Examples: Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is talking about bringing home 70,000 troops from Europe; 3,700 troops and 10,000 family members are returning from South Korea to the United States; and 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission decisions could cause some profitable stores to be closed along with under performing stores. Also, because 63 percent of U.S.-based service members and their families today do not reside on a military installation, they will end up living closer to commercial retail entities than they do to their (on-base) exchanges, Wax said.

### **Exchange Credit Card Interest to Rise**

The Exchange Credit Program is raising the interest rate for the Military STAR card to 10 percent, an increase of .25 percent. Officials explained that the increase is based on the rise of the prime rate to 5 percent, and interest charged is the prime rate plus 5 percent. The new interest rate will take effect after the January billing statement. Any new purchases after the Jan. billing statement will constitute acceptance of the revised interest rate, according to officials. Notification of the rate change will be in the December billing statements. The rate increase doesn't apply to the zero-interest Military Clothing Plans, special promotions already in existence or to deployed customers whose balances are treated under special conditions or have balances at reduced rates. Military STAR cards are valid at Army/Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard exchanges.

### **AAFES: Shoplifting Not Worth a Career**

"Whatever excuses people come up with to justify their actions, the fact remains that none of them are good enough reasons to risk a career over," said Steve Bass, Army and Air Force Exchange Service loss--prevention manager. He noted that AAFES officials apprehend more than 10,000 shoplifters each year, and turn them over to base security and their units for criminal and Uniform Code of Military Justice action. The Civil Recovery Act, which went into effect March 1, 2002, authorizes AAFES officials to collect a \$200 administrative cost plus the value of the stolen items from shoplifters caught in an exchange store. Sponsors are also financially responsible for their family members' actions, under the terms of the AAFES program. Parents of minors caught shoplifting will be billed for the costs. These administrative charges are separate from any criminal prosecution or military disciplinary action, officials said.

### **RC Officers Get New Promotion Policy**

Effective this month, Army Reserve officers will no longer compete for promotion against National Guard officers. Full-time Army Reserve officers will compete for promotion only with other full-timers. The new policy created three new competitive categories for officers previously considered under the single Army Promotion List: a National Guard category; an Army Reserve category for Active-Guard-Reserve officers, known as AGRs; and a category for all other Army Reserve officers. The most significant change will be that Guard officers will compete only against other Guard officers, said Col. Mark Patterson, Officer Division chief in the Directorate of Military Personnel Management, G1. And Army Reserve Troop Program Unit officers, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and Individual Ready Reserve officers will not have to compete against AGR officers.

### **Screenings Needed 4 Months After Redeployment**

Asking most Soldiers who have just returned home from a deployment if they're feeling "downhearted and blue" is probably premature. Asking them three or four months later, though, seems to be the ticket to getting warfighters the help they need for combat-related depression, according to the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe in Heidelberg, Germany. The research unit screened returning troops in Italy first at reintegration and again at 120 days and found that more Soldiers needed help after they had been home for a while. A study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine in July 2004 said that 15.6 to 17.1 percent of military members who served in Iraq or Afghanistan typically screened positive for a mental disorder when they were surveyed three or four months after they got back to their

home base. The study was conducted by researchers at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, parent organization to the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe. While conducting research on a psychological screening tool, the research team from Heidelberg, led by Dr. Kathleen Wright, surveyed troops within their first two weeks of returning to Italy after serving in Iraq. They came up with a 6.5 percent positive rate for mental disorders for the 1,604 Soldiers they screened. For more information, see [http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,usa1\\_010705\\_00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,usa1_010705_00.html)

### **Down With Debt**

Today's interest rates are low by historic standards. Home mortgage rates are around 5 percent; new-car loans average about 6 percent.

However, some types of loan rates are much higher. Credit card rates and personal loan rates now average around 14 percent. While those are the averages, some rates are much higher. If you're paying 18 percent or 20 percent or more on a loan, you're paying too much.

Know the tax angles. Generally, interest that you pay on a home mortgage is tax-deductible. You also can take out a home equity loan, which is backed by your house or condo. On home equity loans up to \$100,000, you can deduct the interest from your taxable income.

In addition, you can deduct the interest that you pay on a loan that is business- or investment-related, in many cases. However, other types of loans (auto loans, credit cards, personal loans) don't provide tax deductions.

For example, if you get a personal loan for \$50,000, and you're charged 20 percent on that loan, you're paying \$10,000 in interest per year, with no tax break.

Pay down your high-rate loans. It generally makes sense to get a low-rate, tax-deductible mortgage loan to buy a home. The same may be true for auto loans, if you plan to keep the car for many years.

Borrowing at high rates, for other purposes, should be avoided. If you have such loans outstanding, pay them down as soon as you can, to stop the interest from running.

Suppose you have a \$50,000, 20 percent loan outstanding. By paying off that loan, you avoid paying \$10,000 a year in interest. In other words, you'd receive a 20 percent after-tax return on your \$50,000, risk-free. Where else can you find that kind of opportunity?

**EOD Robots Performing Tech Wonders in Iraq**

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Whenever an Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician heads downrange, one thing is certain: the robot goes first.

"The cost of losing a robot is not nearly as close as losing a trained EOD person," said Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Carroll, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 184th Ordnance Robotics team from Fort Gillem, Ga., deployed to Baghdad. "Time on target is our biggest danger, and these robots eliminate us from having to go downrange if we don't have to."



Since their EOD inception, robotic systems have saved numerous lives by helping to wipe away the threat of improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne IEDs encountered daily throughout the Iraqi theater of operations.

Not surprisingly, 95 percent of all EOD robots are used for reconnaissance missions and delivering explosives to the hazard for detonation, said Carroll.

"We wouldn't have EOD guys if we didn't have robots to take the hit," he explained about the constant number of IED casualties along main supply routes and in close-quarter urban areas. "These robots are a human cost-saving mechanism."

In addition to taking an IED blast, EOD robots also get shot at by small arms fire, added Carroll.

These "man-portable" robots, initially employed by infantry units for advance scouting purposes, dually serve as multi-versatile, lightweight machines supplementing EOD teams on the roads of Iraq.

"The IED threat is so critical," said Cpt. Jason Souza, officer in charge of the 184th EOD Robotics team. He added that the EOD missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan have exceeded the demand for robots.

The robots, able to be thrown in the back of a chopper or tactical vehicle with ease, each consist of thousands of interlocking parts. They are primarily designed as a track vehicle with a retractable arm claw and camera, and are also capable of being armed with a grenade launcher or other infantry arsenals.

"You put this [robot] on the ground, and people know who you are," said Carroll about EOD. "[Iraqi] kids go 'Boom! Boom!' when they see us because they know an explosion is going to happen. People start to scatter."

Common city obstacles such as getting over a curb or wading through a foot of sewer water are often overcome with the remote control expertise of a skilled EOD technician, but sometimes a bomb blast can get the best of the robot's size, strength and dexterity.

"One lady came back (to the robot repair depot) with only two tracks in her hands," said Marine Master Sgt. Thomas Bogosh, senior noncommissioned officer of the Joint Robotic System Repair Station in Iraq. "They weren't even whole tracks, only parts of them."

His repair station workers, many of whom are former Army and Air Force, work to salvage destroyed robot parts, some still covered in white phosphorous and oil.

But whatever the hurdles, the EOD teams who are out making a safer Iraq are doing so by learning from each other.

"(EOD) is a joint service environment, but we're definitely one team, one fight," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jennifer Smith, EOD information technician. "We're a tight community which shares a lot of information with each other. Whoever needs equipment, gets equipment in EOD."

EOD technicians are schooled on many different types of robots in case the one they prefer is in the repair shop.

A well-working, repairable robot completes more than 1,000 missions during its theater tenure.

The missions wear and tear these battle droids more than in the United States, said Bogosh.

"A year's worth of work back home is equal to one day in Iraq for these robots," he said.

*By Spc. Jonathan Montgomery  
Army News Service (January 10, 2005)*

**Emerging Technologies Form Futuristic Uniform**

ORLANDO, Fla. - Dressed in black from head to toe and wearing a helmet that allows barely a glimpse of his face, Staff Sgt. Raul Lopez looked like something out of a science fiction thriller.



Lopez, an infantry Soldier stationed at the Natick Soldier Center in Massachusetts, spent four days in what could be the Army uniform of the future at the 24th Army Science Conference, explaining the technology behind it.

The black fabric of the form-fitting suit would be made through the wonder of nanotechnology, which involves manipulating atoms and molecules to create things at the nanometer scale. That's about 50,000 times smaller than the diameter of a strand of hair. Soldiers wearing the suit would have the ability to blend into any environment, like a chameleon.

The helmet is the main hub of the uniform, where "all of the action happens," Lopez said. A tiny video camera in front provides 360-degree situational awareness. A series of sensors inside give the Soldier three-dimensional audiological hearing and the ability to amplify specific sounds, while lowering the volume of others.

Complete voice translation is also provided, for what the Soldier hears and what he or she says. Night vision sensors, minimized to the size of pencil erasers, are also in the helmet. Maps and other situational awareness information are projected on the inside of the visor, while everything the Soldier sees and hears is sent in real time up to higher headquarters.

"It's all voice activated," Lopez said. "I can tell it to show me where my buddies are, and it projects it on the visor."

Virtual reality technology would also play a part in helping the Soldier navigate an environment by projecting maps on the ground surrounding him or her.

Sensors detect threat, provide treatment

Thermal sensors weaved into the fabric of the uniform control its temperature, based on the Soldier's environment. An on-board respirator, tethered to the Soldier's back, provides a continuous supply of fresh air – eliminating the need for a protective mask. Should the Soldier have the visor up, or the helmet off, and breath in some kind of harmful agent, the uniform sensor will immediately detect it, release tiny embedded capsules to counter it and inject treatment into the Soldier's body.

From the waist down, a skeletal system allows the Soldier to carry two or three times his or her body weight, feeling only the weight of their own body through the technology of an XO muscle, which augments a Soldier's strength.

Wearing the futuristic suit doesn't make Lopez feel like a science fiction superhero, or invincible.

"It's just conceptual right now," he said, smiling.

Liquid armor protection

The uniform might be made out of fabric treated with another technology featured in the conference's exhibit hall, shear thickening fluid. Unofficially referred to by some as liquid

body armor, STF is made of equal parts polyethylene glycol – an inert, non-toxic thickening agent used in a variety of common products, like some ice creams – and miniscule glass particles, said Eric Wetzel, who heads the STF project team in the Weapons and Materials Research Directorate of the U.S. Army Research Laboratory.

In a small glass vial, the light blue liquid is easily stirred with a small plastic stick – as long as the stick is moving in slow, easy motion. When sudden, rapid or forceful motion is applied, the liquid instantly hardens, preventing any movement.

"When the movement is slow, the glass particles can flow around each other," Wetzel explained. "But when the movement is fast, the particles bump into each other, preventing any flow of movement."

STF has been applied to regular Kevlar material, Wetzel said. The fabric's texture doesn't change; it looks and feels the same as if it hadn't been treated. Using a test swatch of four layers of untreated Kevlar – the normal thickness of body armor – Wetzel is able to stab an ice pick through the fabric. But when stabbing a treated section of fabric with all the force he can muster, the ice pick dents the fabric but can't penetrate through.

Research is being done into whether STF can be of use to the Army, Wetzel said. If it is, Soldiers may start getting gear treated with it in about two years, he added.

*Source: By Sgt. Lorie Jewell Army News Service  
December 08, 2004*

### **Advice Given for Flu**

With a nationwide shortage of flu vaccine, Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Molinda Chartrand, and Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Eric Halsey at Wright--Patterson Air Force Base have provided the following information suitable for readers of Armed Forces News. The flu usually starts suddenly. Symptoms may include fever, headache, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, tiredness, cough and sore throat. Diarrhea and vomiting are more common in children. The flu is spread through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing, and occasionally by touching something with virus on it, and then touching your mouth or nose. Adults can infect others one day before getting symptoms and up to seven days after getting sick. People with the flu need rest and liquids. They should avoid using alcohol and tobacco. They also should take medications to relieve the symptoms. Parents should never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu--like symptoms, particularly fever.

**\*\*TRIVIA QUESTIONS\*\***

This giant of a man starred in the TV version, (that aired for 20 seasons from 1955 - 1975), of a popular western radio series. In 1955 John Wayne was offered the role to star in that TV version but turned it down and recommended this giant of a man be cast and even went so far as to introduce him to the nation's viewers in a specially filmed prologue to the first episode.

After two-decades of playing the TV western series, he starred in a one-short TV movie "The Macahans" in 1976, that evolved into the six-hour miniseries "How the West Was Won" in 1977.

His wartime experiences shattered the normality of having an unremarkable childhood. During the battle of Anzio in World War II where he was wounded, he was awarded a Purple Heart. His right leg was peppered with machine gun bullets, and when the bones were set they didn't mend properly, leaving him with a slight but permanent limp.

*(Answer on page 19)*

**\*\*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](mailto: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](mailto: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:

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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\*\***

American actor James Arness had an unremarkable Minneapolis childhood, but his wartime experiences shattered that normality - literally. During the battle of Anzio, Arness' right leg was peppered with machine gun bullets, and when the bones were set they didn't mend properly, leaving him with a slight but permanent limp. The trauma of the experience mellowed into aimlessness after the war. Arness became a "beach bum," lived out of his car, and worked intermittently as a salesman and carpenter. Acting was treated equally lackadaisically, but by 1947 Arness had managed to break into Hollywood on the basis of his rugged good looks and his 6'6" frame. Few of his screen roles were memorable, though one has become an object of cult worship: Arness was cast as the menacingly glowing space alien, described by one character as "an intellectual carrot," in *The Thing* (1951). For a time it looked as though Arness would continue to flounder in supporting roles, while his younger brother, actor Peter Graves, seemed destined for stardom. John Wayne took a liking to Arness when the latter was cast in Wayne's *Big Jim McLain* (1953). Wayne took it upon himself to line up work for Arness, becoming one of the withdrawn young actor's few friends. In 1955, Wayne was offered the role of Matt Dillon in the TV version of the popular radio series *Gunsmoke*. Wayne turned it down but recommended that Arness be cast and even went so far as to introduce him to the nation's viewers in a specially filmed prologue to the first *Gunsmoke* episode. Truth be told, Arness wasn't any keener than Wayne to be tied down to a weekly series, and as each season ended he'd make noises indicating he planned to leave. This game went on for each of the 20 seasons that *Gunsmoke* was on the air, the annual result being a bigger salary for Arness, more creative control over the program (it was being produced by his own company within a few years) and a sizeable chunk of the profits and residuals. When *Gunsmoke* finally left the air in 1975, Arness was the only one of the original four principals (including Amanda Blake, Milburn Stone and Dennis Weaver) still appearing on the series. Arness made plans to



take it easy after his two-decade *Gunsmoke* hitch, but was lured back to the tube for a one-shot TV movie, *The Macahans* (1976). This evolved into the six-hour miniseries *How the West Was Won* (1977) which in turn led to a single-season weekly series in 1978. All these incarnations starred Arness, back in the saddle as Zeb Macahan. The actor tried to alter his sagebrush image in a 1981 modern-day cop series, *McClain's Law* -- which being set in the southwest permitted Arness to ride a horse or two. It appeared, however that James Arness would always be Matt Dillon in the hearts and minds of fans, thus Arness obliged his still-faithful public with three *Gunsmoke* TV movies, the last one (*Gunsmoke: The Last Apache*) released in 1992. In between these assignments, James Arness starred in a 1988 TV-movie remake of the 1948 western film classic *Red River*, in which he filled the role previously played by his friend and mentor John Wayne. ~ Hal Erickson, All Movie Guide

