



STILL SERVING

Fort Meade Retirement Services Office
ATTN ANME PER X, Building 2234 Huber Road, Fort Meade, MD 20755-5076
Phone: 301-677-9603
e-mail: mderso@emh1.ftmeade.army.mil

Winter 2005

Volume 13, Number 1

TO ALL RETIREES AND FAMILIES – THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

NOTES FROM THE RSO STEVE ASHLEY

I hope this finds everyone having a great new year.

There is a new look to our office. Ms. Tracey Davis has joined Cynthia Johnson and myself. She has recently retired from the Army and I know she will be a great addition. Tracey's and Cynthia's main job is working with retirement applications and those soldiers getting ready to retire.

We had a great Retiree Appreciation Day weekend last fall. The speaker was great and we even procured "The Volunteers" from the US Army Field Band for the Friday night social. I am hoping to make this years event just as good. It will be on 16/17 September. More in the next newsletter.

Our office is located at 2234 Huber Road, the corner of Ernie Pyle and Huber. We are in the basement in Rooms 007/009. Please stop by and say hi. If you wish to discuss an issue this is done by appointment only. Please make one by calling (301)677-9603 or by using the e-mail address below.

The e-mail address for the Retirement Services Office is:
mderso@emh1.ftmeade.army.mil.

**SURVIVING
SPOUSE SYMPOSIUM
11 JUNE 2005**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Installation Cdr's Message -----	page 2
FGGM Retiree Council Chairman's Msg ---	page 3
FGGM Ret. Council Co-Chairman's Msg --	page 4
US Family Health Plan-----	page 7
Keeping Pay Records Current-----	page 7
SBP Changes --- -----	page 7
Tax Statements-----t-----	page 7
Vet Records Are Safe-----	page 8
Notes from KACC Pharmacy ----- ---	page 8
Replacing 214s/Awards-----	page 8
Surviving Spouse Benefits Symposium-----	page 9

NOTICE

Published by the Retirement Services Office (RSO), United States Army Garrison, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland as a Service to Army retirees and their families. Articles appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or the commander. Direct inquiries to the Retirement Services Branch, MPD, ATTN: ANME-PER-X, 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-5076.

INSTALLATION COMMANDER'S MESSAGE COL JOHN IVES

Let me begin this column by wishing all our retirees a Happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year. I hope you were able to enjoy the Holidays by spending some well earned quality time with family and friends. This past year was one of many significant accomplishments at Fort Meade. The coming months promise to be just as exciting for this installation.

The most visible and perhaps welcomed addition to this post in the previous six months was the completion and opening of the new Visitor Control Center at the Reece Road gate in October. The \$3 million facility offers a long overdue improvement to the concrete barriers and World War Two era temporary VCC building formerly located at Llewellyn Avenue. The new control center provides visitors with a customer friendly electronic queue system depending on the required service (vehicle/firearm registration, fingerprinting, temporary pass, etc.). Clerks are also available to provide assistance in spacious cubicles. The new center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Llewellyn Gate is now closed, but visitors may still access the installation at the Rockenbach, Mapes and Route 32 gates.

Earlier in October, we opened our third Child Development Center. Located on Ernie Pyle Street next to the Youth Services building, this new \$5.6 million, 24,000 square foot facility can accommodate nearly 300 children for our military families. There are 75 care providers and staff members with four playgrounds, surveillance cameras, sensed hand-washing sinks and handicap access areas, as well as computer workstations, a science/math room and woodworking shop for skill development. Our service members and their families deserve the best in childcare, and this new facility provides it for them.

By now many of you have probably noticed another new structure on this post. In November we completed work on a Summit Structure. This 24,000 square foot facility, located on Llewellyn Avenue across from the Military Clothing Sales Store, is a much improved and more permanent structure that replaces fest tents previously erected for special events. Anchored 17 feet underground, its galvanized steel frames are designed to withstand 90 mph gale force winds. With a 45 foot-high arched roof, it can

accommodate as many as 1,000 people seated and is intended for year-round use. Translucent panels give it a skylight effect while the interior is wide open without cumbersome center posts.

Fort Meade now has a world-class outdoor special event facility for MeadeFest and other activities. Stop by and take a look when you're on post and be sure to check the Soundoff! for a schedule of happenings at the Summit Structure.

Among other important developments during the last several months here:

- In September, the Department of Defense activated a new organization, the Joint Forces Headquarters for the National Capital Region at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. The mission of this organization is to defend the nation's capital and assist civil authorities in response to a terrorist attack. With our extensive intelligence gathering activities, Fort Meade plays an important role in the global war on terrorism.
- As part of the support we provide, Headquarters Command Battalion schedules quarterly anti-terrorism/force protection training exercises for its Soldiers. These exercises help prepare our personnel to maintain their technical proficiency and readiness for participation in future operations and real world situations that may develop.
- On a related matter, while I have had the privilege of proudly welcoming home some of our returning warriors from tours of duty in Southwest Asia, Fort Meade has also said farewell to other Army Reservists and units activated in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We wish members of the 818th Maintenance Company and 311th Theater Signal Command good luck and God speed as they serve their nation in harm's way.
- Fort Meade passed a memorable milestone this year as we observed the 70th anniversary of the Main Post Chapel in October. Constructed at a cost of only \$75,000 in 1934, this historic building is regarded as an important symbol of the installation's spiritual tradition. Stained glass windows were originally donated by regiments stationed here as well as veterans of the 79th Infantry Division in memory of Soldiers who fought in World War One. Many of our retirees no doubt have fond memories of attending religious

services and special ceremonies and events in this facility.

- One of our other historic facilities will unfortunately close down this year. Due to financial considerations, the Fort Meade Equestrian Center will discontinue operations in March. The land was turned over to the Department of Interior in a former Base Realignment Action. Through the years some of you may have patronized the Center and attended Horse Shows and other equestrian events. We made this decision regretfully, but with decreasing revenue and increased overhead, there was no other choice.
- Our annual Retiree Appreciation Days event in September was again a great success. Health care continues to be a major concern as well as the military survivor benefit program (particularly dental and hearing care) and the rising cost of prescription drugs. Lots of good information was disseminated for our retirees and their families, along with the availability of health screenings and other support provided by various groups and organizations.
- Speaking of health care, providers at Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center can now track whether or not patients have acted upon a doctor's referral for consultation with a specialist as instructed. Health Net Federal Services is the new managed care support contractor for the TRICARE North Region. The Referral Management Center is now available at all military treatment facilities in the National Capital Area. With the referral tracking system, it provides improved quality care and continuity of care for our patients. The Call Center at KACC is set up to make appointments.
- And here's another service that may interest our retiree population. Starting in September the Commissary has begun using Self-Help Checkout lanes. This enables shoppers with only a few items to scan and bag their own groceries to avoid waiting in regular checkout lanes. These four checkout lanes accept cash, credit and debit cards and can even scan coupons. Next time you go shopping and you're in a hurry, give them a try.

That's all for this edition. Let me say that I consider it a privilege and matter of professional pride to continue serving not only

as installation commander. I plan to work closely with our retirees and will keep you informed as best I can of any significant developments affecting the post population. I commend our retirees for "still serving" and look forward to serving along with you.

**FROM THE FORT MEADE RETIREE COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN
Colonel Bert L. Rice, USA (Ret)**

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope that you and your family had a safe and joyous Holiday Season! It seems that the Christmas Holidays come around more quickly than when I was a kid. Does it seem that way with you too?

We are working to get editions of *Still Serving* to the printer and in your hands more quickly. It is imperative that we improve communications with you on a wide range of issues. Once again, I highly encourage that you read *ARMY ECHOES*, the Bulletin for Army Retirees that is published quarterly. It contains articles that provide timely, useful information for all retirees. It will even provide you the date of our next Retiree Appreciation Day activities. So, please read it from cover to cover!

On Saturday, 11 June 2005, we will be hosting a Surviving Spouses Benefits Symposium at the Fort Meade Golf Club House. The purpose of the symposium is to provide surviving spouses information to enhance their planning for both near-term and longer-term accommodations. When the symposium was conducted in 2003 it was well received by attendees. As a result, several surviving spouses asked that we repeat the symposium every two years. So, we will do that again this year!

Ms. Cecille Morse will serve as chairman and has already asked several agencies to support the event. We have invited representatives from Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, Legal Assistance, and Health Care Agencies to share information and, then, be available to answer questions. So, surviving spouses, please mark your calendars now and plan to attend the symposium on Saturday, 11 June 2005. Space is limited to 150 people; therefore, send in your reservations as soon as possible. See the reservation form elsewhere in this newsletter. We will accommodate the first 150 surviving spouses who respond. Your prompt response will facilitate final planning and arrangements at the Fort Meade Golf Club House!

The Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) activities conducted on Friday and Saturday, 10 - 11 September 2004 were quite successful but not as well attended as in the past. In part, that was because many of you received the newsletter late and were unable to rearrange your schedules to attend. The fault was not with the Retirement Services Office personnel here at Fort Meade. After finalizing the newsletter well in advance, the problem we encountered was in getting the newsletter processed through the system to the printer and mailed – caused a big delay! We will start at least a month earlier in 2005 so that the information will be out sooner giving you ample time to make reservations to attend RAD activities. The installation is supporting us in this matter, which will help.

Please mark your calendars now for the next Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) activities planned for Friday and Saturday, 16 - 17 September 2005. Plan to attend the next RAD! NO EXCUSES FOR NOT KNOWING WHEN THE NEXT RAD WILL BE CONDUCTED! By the way, we hope to tie the RAD in with special sales at both the AAFES (PX) and the Commissary.

By now you have read about the fix to the Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP). After many years of work by retiree councils, including the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council, and veterans organizations, the issue is finally being resolved. The fix will be phased in by 2008 when a surviving spouse will receive 55 percent of the military service member's retired pay – without a reduction that is now the case. We thank everyone who contributed to the success of resolving this issue! It seems that the good things in life take just a little longer to achieve, but persistence pays off!

A HOT ISSUE in Maryland continues to be the exemption of military service retired pay from State and local income taxes. The Maryland Retired Veterans Task Force (MRVTF) reports that there will be a tremendous effort to get legislation passed during the coming legislative session that begins in January 2005. To assure that the exemption becomes a reality, the MRVTF, comprised of representatives from all major veterans organizations, is asking that all retirees and their families get involved in a grassroots effort to help assure passage of the required legislation. Therefore, retirees are encouraged to contact elected the State Senator and Delegates in your respective legislative districts urging support of the legislation.

History of this legislation for the past three years shows that it will take an all out effort and that retirees are key to the passage of this legislation. There are a number of options in contacting elected officials that include phone calls, letters, FAX, email messages and personal contact. The following web sites are helpful in contacting elected officials and in acquiring information about the proposed legislation – www.marylandveterans.org; <http://mlis.state.md.us>; and www.mdvets.org

The Fort Meade Retiree Council continues to identify issues related either to retirees only or to active duty and retirees. The Retiree Council forwards issues through the chain of command to the Department of the Army Retirement Services Office. Issues from throughout the Army are consolidated and then provided the Army Chief of Staff's Retiree Council for review and action, as appropriate. Solving the SBP problem is an example of one issue that the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council took on to work and resolve. The process works and benefits the retired community!

In closing, I want to remind you of the upcoming Surviving Spouses Benefits Symposium for surviving spouses on Saturday, 11 June 2005 and Retiree Appreciation Day activities that will be conducted on Friday and Saturday, 16 - 17 September 2005. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend, if appropriate!

I wish you and yours a safe and Happy New Year! God Bless you and may God continue to Bless America!

FROM THE CO-CHAIRMAN SGM KENNETH L. MCCALL, SR., USA RET

Having just finished enjoying the Thanksgiving holiday and as we enter the year end festive season, I realized that I have an opportunity to give thanks to so many that have given support to our family of military retirees and active duty as well, for it is through our efforts that we ensure the future of those that follow after us.

First, we must give thanks to they whom we hold in reverent awe for it is through their blessings that all is made possible. Next, we must give thanks to our Installation Commander, COL John Ives and his staff of military and civilian professionals who on a daily basis, take that extra step to provide support and service that is "second to none", to "our family". They listen to the concerns expressed

by your Retiree Council and others, and work diligently to address and resolve them. An example of this outstanding support was demonstrated on both 10 and 11 September 2004, when Mr. Stephen Ashley (Retirement Services Officer) and his assistant, Mrs. Cynthia Johnson, coordinated and executed our Retiree Appreciation Day celebration that included a Friday evening social with dinner at which COL Ives gave opening remarks, a Saturday Health Fair sponsored by COL Billie J. Mielcarek and her staff from the Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center, which also included many service oriented organizations that manned information booths and distributed information packets. Gift packets and door prizes were donated by the Commissary

(Mr. Paul Rhodes), AAFES (Ms Betty O'Brien), MWR (Mr. Al Macklin), the Retiree Council and the RSO staff. The Fort Meade chapters of The Retired Enlisted Association and the Association of the United States Army and the Retiree Council provided Saturday morning's refreshments. (Your Retiree Council provided administrative support both Friday and Saturday). LTC Thomas Pamperin, US Army Retired, currently an assistant director with the Department of Veterans Affairs, was the guest speaker for Saturday's assembly, and provided an overview of basic VA benefits, discussed the types of disability entitlements that some military retirees may qualify for, and conducted a question and answer session at which he was bombarded with a number of questions pertaining to VA care and lack of same. The session was very well received. As with the Friday night dinner, lunch at Club Meade were both gastronomical delights and we appreciate the hospitality delivered by their staff.

WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF PLANNING OUR 2005 EVENT AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE TO OFFER.)

We must also give thanks to your group of dedicated volunteers that constitute your Retiree Council. They represent your interest by serving on installation committees, attending various meetings and ceremonies, providing speakers for selected events, providing the Army Chief of Staff with issues/concerns relative to both military retirees and active duty, meeting with both federal and state elected officials to address relative concerns and meeting with installation officials to provide them with input needed to support the military retired community. A LIST OF YOUR

REPRESENTATIVES IS INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE OF OUR NEWSLETTER.

Not only must thanks be extended to, but we must applaud the outstanding work of Ms Jamie Miller, an extremely energetic teacher at Fort Meade's McArthur Middle School, for she coordinates programs that brings living military history to the schools Flying Tigers and Screaming Eagle teams, discussed by the men and women who were there. I and other members of your Retiree Council (COL Rice, CPT Rogers and SFC DePorto), have participated in these events held in conjunction with selected patriotic holidays and days of remembrance. The guests give accounts of their participation in past/current wars as well as their service to our country.

As with past events, I was asked to participate in their recent Veterans Day program, along with others, which I did. Having recently read a poem entitled, "Its Always the Soldier", I planned my presentation around our Constitution, its amendments and how the soldier/veteran serves/served to protect the freedoms outlined in our Constitution. I also provided them with an insight as to the history surrounding Armistice (Veterans) Day and why it is so important to recognize those that have served and are serving, and those that made the ultimate sacrifice in support of our nation and its commitment to global freedom. I reminded them that too often we forget those that served during the Cold War and of the many that were injured or made the ultimate sacrifice on the fields of Europe or Asia either in training exercises or while on Border Patrol, or in the skies or on seas where our men and women served. Their contributions were just as meaningful. I shared with them the responsibilities associated with their reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and the commitments that they make to the people of our great nation. I reminded the students that veterans are not only those that wear the uniforms of the military, but those that have served who may be teachers, store clerks, postal workers, sanitation workers, doctors, nurses, parents, grandparents, other relatives and many, many others to include the homeless and the efforts that must be made to care for them. I charged each with seeking a family member, a friend or neighbor that may have served, asking them to tell of their service and to thank them for protecting our freedoms. Again, thanks must be given to Ms Miller for her continuing undertaking of this Herculean task and allowing us to be a part of it NOTE: If you

are interested in participating in one of these events, write to me at P.O. Box J77, Fort Meade, MD 20755.

We must also give thanks to Ms Lisa R. Rhodes, a staff writer with the Fort Meade newspaper, Sound Off, for her superb work with the profiling of Retired Military and Family Members that continue to serve as volunteers not only at Fort Meade, but within the civilian community as well. During interviews with her subjects, she asks thought provoking questions that cause one to reach into the recesses of their mind to recall events that are germane to both her subject and the article she is preparing. She also assists the Retired Services Officer in putting together the "Retired, Still Serving" column that is featured in the Sound Off. She is truly a professional that warrants our continued support. Keep up the great work Ms Rhodes.

And last, but by no means least, we must give thanks to a segment of our society that many thought would never be able to meet the challenges that their nation would face, our youth who serve in our armed forces. Ralph Waldo Emerson penned these words that are as true today as they were yesterday for they describe the dedication and contributions that they are making. It reads in part: SO NIGH IS GRANDEUR TO OUR DUST, SO NEAR IS GOD TO MAN, WHEN DUTY WHISPERS LOW, 'THOU MUST', THE YOUTH REPLIES, 'I CAN.' For today throughout this great nation of ours and around the world, the youth have again picked up the gauntlet to follow in the footsteps of their mothers, fathers, their sisters and their brothers as they have stepped forward to protect those rights guaranteed by our Constitution. To do so, lives have been lost, blood has been shed, limbs have been lost and lives have been disrupted all in the interest of freedom that our country represents. And as all of you know, FREEDOM IS NOT FREE. Our troops need our prayers and support as much today as we needed it yesterday and we should take every opportunity to verbalize and show that support. Those that are able should consider organizing a trip to either Walter Reed Army Hospital or the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, to visit with the casualties of our current war. There are many. Some have families, some do not. They all need a form of positive reinforcement to help them through their period of recovery. And to the men and women who are providing both health and professional care to our casualties, a special salute is sent for the outstanding job that they are doing in not only healing the wounds, but the

minds as well for they are instilling the will to live and to overcome the limitations caused by their condition.

Maryland State Income Tax reform for retired military continues to be a hot topic that has generated a lot of interest with our state legislators. The Coalition that was formed to make its recommendations to the states governor continues to pursue this issue and we should hear more from them in the very near future through information published in the Sound Off. The Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs has stated that this issue will be given favorable consideration within the coming legislative session.

Identity theft continues to be a grave issue especially amongst the older Americans. Those of you that may have concerns, should contact their local police department for literature on this subject, or obtain same from their local Department of Aging. Protect your identification cards, drivers license, social security card, your Medicare card and any other item that may contain your sensitive information. Be reluctant to share that information with those that you do not know and many that you do know. Earlier in this article, I shared with you my experience with the students at MacArthur Middle School this past Veterans Day and I was concerned whether or not they understood the message that I was giving them. Well, I have received my answer in the form of approximately 70 letters from those students thanking me for providing them with information on Veterans and how they have served to protect constitutional freedoms, the responsibilities they assume when reciting the Pledge and the meaning of Veterans Day. I even received a letter from a young student that was absent on that day, but her friends told her of the class and its contents that inspired her to write. Needless to say, this really made my day. As an aside, I must tell you that these youngsters persuaded their parents to fix their favorite dish, which they served as lunch to all of the speakers. It was great.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support and the encouraging words that you provide whenever we meet. It indicates that we are providing a needed service. And in the words of our good friend Max, "May God continue to hold all of you in the hollow of his hand". I hope your holidays were enjoyable and may you all have a prosperous New Year.

US FAMILY HEALTH PLAN

US Family Health Plan is a military health care program sponsored by the Department of Defense through the Johns Hopkins Health System. This is an optional health care program available to retirees and their family members residing in the National Capital Area. While this plan mirrors the TRICARE program provided through the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs), it is important to note that while under the Hopkins/US Family Health Plan you are **not authorized to use any Military Treatment Facilities or any MTF pharmacy services worldwide as well.** If traveling outside the geographic service area of this plan you are covered for medical emergency care but should call 1-800-808-7347 to report these services within 24 hours. Routine out of area care must have pre-authorization to allow for coverage of charges.

Enrollment in this plan is for a one year period and **disenrollment before the end of that designated time is not allowed unless there is a change of eligibility or a move out of this geographic service area.** This enrollment is portable and transferable, in the event of such a move, to one of the other five US Family Health Plan sites within the United States or to any TRICARE Prime program through the Military Treatment Facilities.

Annual enrollment fees for all eligible beneficiaries under the age of 65 are \$230 for a single individual or \$460 for a family of two or more. Retired military beneficiaries age 65 and older are also welcome to enroll in the US Family Health Plan. Medicare eligible individuals enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B are exempt from the annual enrollment fees. The plan **does require these members to use providers in their contracted network only and limits use of their regular Medicare coverage.**

For additional information on the US Family Health Plan please call 1-800-808-7347 or visit the web site at www.hopkinsmedicine.org/usfhp.

KEEPING YOUR PAY RECORDS CURRENT

Too often a survivor has been denied Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) benefits because the retiree failed to update retired pay records when

the retiree married, divorced, remarried, was widowed or gained a child. There are also surviving spouses who have not received the unpaid retired pay for the portion of the last month the retiree was alive because the money went to someone else whom the Soldier has named at retirement.

There are the former spouses who lost SBP because neither the former spouse nor the retiree notified DFAS within a year of the divorce that SBP was a part of the divorce by sending a letter and a copy of the decree.

REMEMBER: You are responsible for updating your retired pay file information at DFAS-CL (address below) within one year of the event if you marry, remarry, have a child, are widowed or divorces and need to make or update a SBP election.

DFAS – CLEVELAND CTR
US MILITARY RETIRED PAY
PO BOX 7130
LONDON, KY 40742-7130
FAX 1-800-982-8459

SBP CHANGES

After a long hard fight by retirees and the different military organizations Congress has passed a major change to the Survivor Benefit Plan in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 05. Annuities for beneficiaries over 62 will no longer be reduced from 55% to 35%. The change is being phased in over the next three years. The minimum SBP annuity for survivors age 62 and older will raise from 35% to 40% of the base amount covered as of October 1, 2005; to 45% of the base amount on April 1, 2006; to 50% on April 1, 2007; and 55% on April 1, 2008. For further information please read the "Army Echoes" or see your local RSO.

TAX STATEMENTS

DFAS mailed paper copies of retiree and annuitant tax statements at the end of December. Retiree and annuitants who use the online MyPay system (<https://myPay.dfas.mil>) could access and print their tax statements beginning in the middle of December. If you want a mailed copy of your tax statement and haven't received one, you should contact the DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Center in

Cleveland, OH at 1-800-321-1080, Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Eastern Time. You can also e-mail DFAS through their web site <http://www.dfas.mil>.

VETS RECORDS ARE SAFE

A rumor has been circulating that Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) at the National Personnel Records Center operated by the National Archives and Records Administration will be digitized and then destroyed. This rumor is NOT TRUE.

Neither the DoD nor the NPRC intends to destroy any OMPFs stored at the center. The purpose of any electronic scanning would be to help preserve the originals and increase efficiency in handling reference requests. (Note: Please share this news with anyone you know who has heard the rumor.)

NOTES FROM THE KACC PHARMACY

With the recent removal of VIOXX® from the market and the claims by Dr. Graham about 5 other drugs, many patients may be concerned about whether it is safe to take their medications. There are 3 things you should always remember about your medications. First, all medications have risks and side effects. Second, the newest and most advertised medication is not necessarily the best medication and finally you should never start or stop a medication without consulting with your health care provider.

Most people would be surprised to learn that water, if consumed in large quantities, can kill you. The same is true for medications. Medications that are available in the U.S. typically go through a long detailed 10-15 year process before they are made available to the public. Even then, medications have side effects and risks. However based on rigorous evidence the risks and side effects are minimal when compared with the benefit of the medication. The best way to prevent problems with your medications is to become knowledgeable about your healthcare.

We've all seen the advertisements for medications on television, in your favorite magazines, and on billboards. Some of us even research the medications online. It is important to remember that all these advertisements have an agenda: TO SELL THAT MEDICATION. I

always tell my patients that drug treatment is like a jigsaw puzzle. You have to fit the right medication to the right patient. The newest drug may work for most patients but chances are that there is an older, more proven drug that will work just as well or even better. Some would ask, "Why aren't these drugs advertised?" If you could make \$10 per tablet for a new drug or 10 cents per tablet for an older drug, which one would you advertise?

After you have done your research, make sure to discuss your medications with your doctor and your pharmacist. The doctor, pharmacist and patient are all part of the medication triangle. For your therapy to be most effective, all 3 sides of the triangle must be involved. Any time you start a medication, always consult with your health care provider. This is important not only so they can assure that you are getting the best medication but also to make sure that the rest of your medications don't interact with the new drug. Also, if you are stopping a medication, make sure to let your health care provider know, so that they can update your medication list and ensure you are receiving appropriate therapy for your medical conditions.

Although there are many sources of information available to patients about their medications, it is important to be aware who is putting out that information and why. Ultimately, the best sources of information are your healthcare provider and your pharmacist. Together with the patient, the best treatment can be individualized for everyone.

REPLACING DD FORM 214 OR LOST AWARDS

Please write to the following address:

National Personnel Records Center
ATTN: Army Reference Branch (NCPMA) if
214s / (NRPMA-M) if awards
9700 Page Ave
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
Or you can go on-line to:
<http://vetrecs.archives.gov>

(make sure you include your name, rank, ssn and dates you were in the service.)

SURVIVING SPOUSE BENEFITS SYMPOSIUM

The Fort Meade Retiree Council cordially invites Surviving Spouses to a Symposium at the Fort Meade Golf Course Club House on Saturday, June 11, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 P.M.

Representatives of the Social Security Administration, Veterans Affairs, Legal Assistance and Health Care Agencies will give presentations.

The Symposium will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and the presentations will commence at 9:00 A.M. A luncheon will be served from 11:30 to 12:00 p.m. All activities will be held at the Fort Meade Golf Course Club House off Mapes Road.

If you wish to attend, please return the completed pre-registration form below with a check to cover the cost of the number of attendees at \$9.00 per person, i.e., (2 persons attending X \$9.00 = \$18.00). The price includes the cost of the luncheon. Make the check out to: Cecille Morse. Your completed pre-registration form along with a check must be received at the Retirement Services Office NO LATER THAN May 20, 2005.

We are pleased to be able to demonstrate through this event that you are a valued asset to the total military community. We hope this Symposium will provide you an opportunity to make new friends and renew acquaintances as well as keep you up to date on the latest issues confronting surviving spouses. Please call the Retirement Services Office at (301) 677-9603, if you have any questions.

PLEASE NOTE: Since the capacity of the meeting room is limited to 150 persons, **we will accept the first 150 reservations from Surviving Spouses – so please send in your completed registration form with a check for the correct amount as soon as possible. THANK YOU!**

Luncheon Menu: Roast Beef au jus, Garlic Whipped Potatoes, Green Beans Almandine, Tossed Green Salad with Dressing, Rolls and Butter, Iced Tea and Lemonade, and Cake

Cut along line and return completed pre-registration form and check to the Retirement Services Office_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

NUMBER ATTENDING _____ **X \$9.00 =** _____ **(Total Amount)**

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: CECILLE MORSE

SUSPENSE DATE: TO RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICE NOT LATER THAT MAY 20, 2005

RETURN PRE-REGISTRATION FORM AND CHECK TO: Retirement Services Office
ATTN: ANME-PER-X
2234 Huber Road
Fort Meade, MD 20755- 5076

