



# RETIREE NEWSLETTER



*“They Also Serve”*

## **COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST NEWSLETTER**

### ***FROM THE CHAIR***

The Retiree Council continues to operate its office at the ISC, in Room 101 of the BEQ however, a move to Building No. 1 is in the planning stage. 1999 saw a growing traffic pattern as both members of the retiree community and active duty Coasties became more aware of the services being provided. We believe there is even more opportunity to be of assistance, if we can train a few more volunteer retirees to man the office a few hours a week. As it currently stands, we are only able to man the office for one day a week for about six hours, thanks to the efforts of Ev Black and Liz Tomasito. We are also able to receive and record telephone calls (206) 217-6188 and to respond to them to an acceptable degree. Unfortunately, we are seeing people give up on us when there is nobody there to answer the phone. During 1999 our volunteers dealt with the following:

General questions on retiree issues:	93
Telephone calls (incoming and outgoing):	212
Office visits:	86
Address changes/new arrivals:	51
Assistance to survivors:	9
Decedent affairs: 1	3
Transitions from active status (1st visit):	65

As you can see, our office has had lots of action. The “transition” visits are usually from those active duty personnel preparing to retire, usually within six months, or for those being separated for medical reasons. Decedent affairs has included help for Army and Navy personnel as well as our own. We have been able to assist people from such areas as Coos Bay, Port Angeles and Astoria and have had very favorable reactions from those helped.

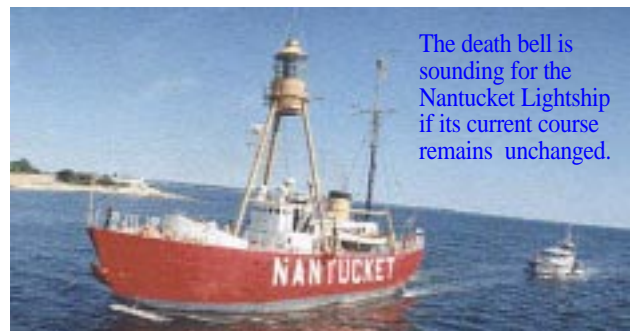
If any of you feel you can help us with our support activities please let us know by contacting any of the Council members by phone or Email at the addresses listed at the end of this newsletter.

*Al Manning, Co-Chair*

### **USCG LIGHTSHIP SAILORS ASSOCIATION (LSA)**

*The USCG Lightship Sailors Association came about through the ideas and efforts of Marty Kryzwicki who worked for over a year to bring about the first reunion of this group in August of 1999.*

Lightships are a thing of the past. The last lightship station bit the dust in 1983. (Nantucket) The purpose of Lightship Sailors Association then, is to preserve what they can of traditions and history of an era that spanned 1820 to 1983, with 179 ships that served 116 stations. The stations of course are now non-existent, and consist only of empty stretches of water marked by a buoy or perhaps not marked at all. The ships are all but gone too. Of that once proud and mighty fleet only 15 remain and half of those are beyond hope of saving. The LSA is dedicated to preserving those remaining ships. The many, perhaps thousands, of stalwart souls that manned those ships have dwindled as well. As we greet the new millennium, it is sobering to realize that by the year 2100 there will be not one lightship sailor left and possibly not even one ship. The Association is presently small but growing rapidly and takes this opportunity to invite others to join them. All those who once served on a lightship are especially welcome and urgently needed. If there was a family member with lightship service, you too are welcome. Or perhaps there is no direct connection, but only an intense interest in this colorful chapter of our maritime



The death bell is sounding for the Nantucket Lightship if its current course remains unchanged.

history, you also are invited aboard. They have established a web page with a number of photographs of ships and personnel involved with their group. It is located at [www.uscglightshipsailors.org/](http://www.uscglightshipsailors.org/)

The first reunion of the LSA was held in Quincy, MA and was hosted by the Friends of Lightship Nantucket-1 (WAL-612). Friends of Nantucket are fighting a losing battle right now to save WAL-612, the last active lightship from being sold as scrap metal by the Metropolitan District Commission of Quincy, MA.

Although small in number, with only 25 lightship sailors in attendance, the interest generated in LSA was intense. Another reunion will be held in 2000 at Baltimore, MD., though the date as yet has not been set. Robert Macleod was appointed President Pro-Tem with Norman LeMoine as Treasurer.

Lightships were more than just "manned bouys". During WWII most lightships were removed from station and became "Examination Ships", the majority operating from their normal home port. The mission was early sighting, identification and reporting of all shipping inbound to the port. Some did this while anchored and others stayed underway and patrolled a given area. It was mostly a routine and boring assignment without much to write home about. There were, however, some exceptions.

A lightship, was sent to Alaska to become an "Examination Vessel". The ship was formerly assigned to Umatilla Reef or Swiftsure Bank, operating out of Seattle. In early 1942 the Coast Guard was dredging up all kinds of weird craft to use for ASW, patrol, convoy and various other jobs. Some of what went on seems today a little bizarre, but at the time we just took it in stride.

This particular lightship was armed with nothing less than a 4inch/50cal weapon mounted up forward. Back aft they planted a "Y" gun. (a device used to toss depth

charges out and away from the ship) The ship was sent to Juneau AK and subsequently began to patrol the waters of Icy Strait between Cape Spencer and Indian Head Light. The duty was arduous to say the least.

WLV 113/WAL 535 (1929-1968) was donated to the Sea Scouts 1968, but returned to USCG and was later sold for scrap. She sank at a shipyard in Willamette River, OR, 1982 but was raised, repaired and sold. She saw use as a floating restaurant/lounge at Newport, OR, 1983-1987. She was sold again in 1988, but while being towed to Ketchikan, AK, sank on June 16 off the Oregon coast in 590 feet. Former station assignments for WLV113/WAL535 included: Swiftsure Bank, 1930-1961; Umatilla Reef, 1961; Relief, 1961-1968; (USN Examination Vessel, 1942-1945).

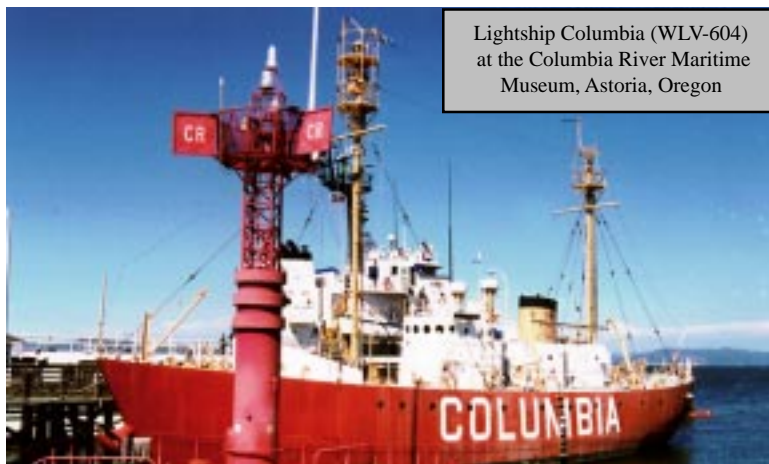
If you are at all interested, or know someone who shares that interest, let them know. Membership is \$25 annually and applications should be forwarded to:  
CWO Norman LeMoine USCG (ret)  
333 So. Patrick Dr. #30  
Satellite Beach, Fla. 32937  
e-mail: "Norm LeMoine" [bosunlocker@castlegate.net](mailto:bosunlocker@castlegate.net)

If you have other questions write or email to the following addresses:

Robert Macleod  
Rgbyseast@aol.com  
8268 Ferrell Place  
Harrisburg, NC 28075  
619-427-8501

Jim Gill  
pdp@king.cts.com  
642 Marina Pkwy #63  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

*All interested Coast Guardmen are invited to join in the fight with Friends of Lightship Nantucket-1 (WAL 612). Contact your elected representatives and ask them to champion the cause to save the last active duty lightship from the scrap heap. Nantucket-1 can be saved for our posterity as was the beloved Columbia River Lightship (WLV-604) in Astoria.*



Lightship Columbia (WLV-604)  
at the Columbia River Maritime  
Museum, Astoria, Oregon

**RETIREE NEWSLETTER**

The RETIREE NEWSLETTER is a publication containing news of general interest, suggestions, and information to keep Coast Guard retirees and their dependents informed of recent developments. This publication shall not be considered authority and is non-record material. Comments and suggestions should be directed to the editor, Patrick Wills, care of:  
COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST  
USCG Integrated Support Command Worklife (Retiree Council)  
1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1  
Seattle, Washington 98134



*This is the continuation of a series of questions and answers about TRICARE that will appear over the next couple issues of the Retiree Newsletter.*

11. *How do TRICARE Service Centers assist beneficiaries?* TRICARE Service Centers are staffed by health care professionals who are there to help beneficiaries get the service that they need. Such as:

- + Health Care Finders, who will make appointments and help find specialists when you need them. They also provide names of doctors participating in the TRICARE Extra network, and will help locate doctors who accept Medicare payments for services provided Medicare eligible beneficiaries age 65 and over.
- + Beneficiary Services Representatives, who will help explain the options available to you and assist in your choice of the program that suits you best. They can enroll you in TRICARE Prime, assist with the selection of a Primary Care Manager, and help resolve any billing problems. TRICARE Service Centers also send beneficiaries TRICARE information packages describing the features of each of the TRICARE options and what alternatives are available for each beneficiary category.

12. *How can I find out more information about the TRICARE program?* By visiting or calling your local TRICARE Service Center which is usually located near or within a MTF, or, the Health Benefits Advisor (HBA) at any MTF.

13. *What is my priority for care in the MTF?* By law, priority for care at the MTF will be based on the following criteria: + Active duty personnel + Active duty family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime + Retirees, Survivors and their family members enrolled in Prime + Active duty family members not enrolled in Prime + Retirees, Survivors and their family members not enrolled in Prime Non-enrolled persons eligible for military health care will be seen at military hospitals and clinics on a space-available basis.

14. *If I have a grievance for services rendered under the TRICARE program, who can I contact?* Any grievance should be reported to the MTF Commander or Lead Agent. Generally, the regional Managed Care Support contractor will be responsible for grievances for services rendered by civilian network providers under the TRICARE program. Contact the nearest TRICARE Service Center for more information.

15. *Is there a maximum that I may have to pay under the three TRICARE options?* Under TRICARE Standard and Extra, active duty family members can be responsible for up to \$1,000 and retirees for up to \$7,500 per year in total out-of-pocket costs for covered medical services. Under Prime, the maximum out-of-pocket expenditure per year for covered medical services is \$1,000 for active duty family members

and \$3,000 for retirees and their families per enrollment year. Effective March 26, 1998 the catastrophic cap for the Prime Point-of-Service option will be lifted. Under the Point-of-Service option you pay 50 percent of the cost after a separate, somewhat higher deductible is met (\$300 for single enrollment and \$600 for family enrollment).

#### TRICARE PRIME

16. *Should a family member covered by other comprehensive health insurance enroll in Prime?* If a family member has other comprehensive health care insurance, we do not encourage enrollment in TRICARE Prime. When other comprehensive health coverage is involved, TRICARE is automatically the secondary payer. It may be easier to coordinate benefits with other health insurance under TRICARE Extra and TRICARE Standard. Please check with your TRICARE Service Center for further guidance.

17. *What guarantees do I have that, as a TRICARE Prime enrollee, I won't just end up on the phone, waiting to make an appointment at the hospital or clinic?* Like many aspects of TRICARE Prime, performance standards have been applied to the central appointments system, which is available at most locations. We have arranged for enough phone lines and people to answer them to avoid patients waiting for unreasonable periods of time. If additional capability is still required, we will provide it. However, you will likely find busy signals and long waits a thing of the past.

18. *What should I do if I'm a Prime enrollee and get sick while traveling outside my region? What if the 800 number is busy and I can't make contact?* You should contact your Primary Care Manager for instructions in a non-emergency situation. Authorization for care can also be obtained from the Health Care Finders. For non-urgent or non-emergency care you must first obtain authorization. If you see a physician without authorization for a non-emergency problem, you will still be covered for some of the costs incurred under the Point-of-Service option. That option pays 50 percent of the cost after a separate, somewhat higher deductible is met (\$300 for single enrollment and \$600 for family enrollment).

#### Active Duty

19. *I'm on active duty and stationed away from a military installation. What do I do for medical care, and do I have to pay?* Currently, as an active duty member, you are covered for your health care needs through supplemental care funds; under no circumstance will you be required to pay for any health care you may need. While not available currently, policy changes are being worked to provide TRICARE Prime from civilian PCM in the local area for Geographically Separated Units (GSU). Enrollment

20. *Does the enrollment fee for TRICARE Prime have to be paid all at once, or can it be paid in installments?* It is permissible to pay the Prime enrollment fee in quarterly installments. There is no additional administrative fee for quarterly payments.

21. *How can I enroll in TRICARE Prime?* If you are on active duty you will be enrolled in TRICARE Prime automatically and assigned a Primary Care Manager. When

Prime is fully implemented in your area, other categories of beneficiaries can enroll on a voluntary basis either by visiting or calling the local TRICARE Service Center and completing an enrollment application.

22. *What is my priority for being offered enrollment in TRICARE Prime?* Priority for enrollment is:

- 1) active duty will be automatically enrolled and receive most of their care in the MTF
- 2) active duty family members may voluntarily enroll and will be primarily accommodated within the MTF
- 3) retirees and their family members and survivors may voluntarily enroll. If the MTF has reached capacity, everyone wishing to enroll in Prime will be referred to the network providers.

23. *If I enroll in TRICARE Prime does that mean that my whole family has to enroll?* Not all family members are required to enroll in TRICARE Prime. Depending on your specific situation and needs, it may be best, for example, for a spouse to be in TRICARE Prime, and a student son or daughter, to use Extra or Standard. Contact your TRICARE Service Center for advice.

24. *Is there a minimum enrollment period requirement for TRICARE Prime?* Enrollment is for a 12-month period under TRICARE Prime. At the end of this initial consecutive 12-month enrollment period, you must choose to continue your enrollment in Prime or choose another option that best suits your situation. If you disenroll early for nonpayment of fees, or you request disenrollment without a move, you will be eligible to re-enroll in 12 months.

25. *If I choose to disenroll after I have enrolled in TRICARE Prime, what penalty is incurred? Can I get back into TRICARE Prime if I don't like the other options?* If the enrollment fee was paid in one payment, you will not receive a refund. Enrollment is for 12 months, unless you move from the area or lose eligibility; if you disenroll early you are eligible to re-enroll in 12 months.

26. *Are there any deadlines or restrictions for enrolling in TRICARE Prime?* If implemented in your area, you may enroll in TRICARE Prime at any time. Please note that while enrollment for Prime is on a continuous basis, assignment to a Primary Care Manager in a military clinic, where treatment is free, is based on a first come, first served basis. However, Military Treatment Facility Commanders can determine whether your enrollment will be to a civilian Primary Care Manager or an MTF Primary Care Manager. Those enrolled to an MTF may be required to select a civilian Primary Care Manager at the time of re-enrollment because of changes in MTF capacity.

27. *Can my son or daughter, who is away from home at college, enroll in TRICARE Prime at his college if the option is available there?* For active duty families your son or daughter may enroll in TRICARE Prime as an individual if the option is offered in his or her geographic area. Retiree's and their family members will have the option of split enrollments (enroll as a family in one region and pay one fee but be able to

receive care for children in school in a different region) once all regions are up and fully functional.

28. *In the near future, I might want my children, who will be leaving for college, to switch from Prime to Standard. What is the process for this?* Currently, when you enroll yourself or your family in Prime, there is a one-year commitment. If you know in advance that you will want to change programs, you will have the option not to re-enroll those persons at the end of the year. However, disenrollment is permissible for a move. By not enrolling you will automatically be participating in TRICARE Standard.

29. *As a retiree enrolled in TRICARE Prime, does my enrollment transfer to the new region if I move?* As a retiree you will be allowed to disenroll and re-enroll twice during the same year. The caveat is that you re-enroll to the original region (i.e. disenroll in Region 1 and enroll to Region 3 then disenroll in 3 and re-enroll back to Region 1). You will be covered for emergency care under Prime from your original region while in route to the next region.

30. *If my family moves to a different region, are we (active duty) automatically assigned a new Primary Care Manager, or do we have to re-enroll?* Enrollment in TRICARE Prime entails the assignment of a Primary Care Manager, enrollment in DEERS, and communication with the member on what enrollment in the TRICARE program means. For active duty members, enrollment is automatic. For active duty family members, enrollment in TRICARE Prime is on a voluntary basis. Currently, if you move to a different region, you will have up to 30 days at the new site to enroll. Your old region will cover you for care until you enroll at the new region. Enrolled members will start a new 12-month enrollment period.

*To Be Continued*

## Attention All Bluenosed Sailors

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> All Icebreaker Sailor Reunion will be held August 24-26, 2000 at the Holiday Inn Marine World, Vallejo, CA. Contact Bruce Brady at (800) 919-8036, pin 97. E-mail contact is wagb4@home.com. Snail mail to 40 Fourth Street #238, Petaluma, CA 94952*



*CGC Healy (WAGB 20) the newest icebreaker to join the fleet. Named after Captain Michael A. Healy, famed commanding officer of the Revenue Cutter Bear 1886-1895*

## **2000 COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE**

The Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) 2000 fund raising campaign will commence on 01 March 2000 and will end on 30 April 2000. The goal of the campaign is to ensure that every member of the Coast Guard family, including active duty and retired military personnel, civilian employees, reservists, auxiliaries and public health service officers serving with the Coast Guard, receives a campaign brochure and contribution form, and an opportunity to contribute to this worthwhile organization.

This annual fund raising campaign, allows Coast Guard people to help other Coast Guard people who find themselves in unexpected financial need. "We look after our own" is CGMA's motto. Through your heartfelt contributions, CGMA can continue to respond to the needs of its members.

During 1999, CGMA provided in excess of \$5,900,000 of financial assistance, in the form of loans and grants, to 7,800 members of our Coast Guard family. Once again, these numbers confirmed the high level of needs that our members face and CGMA's continued commitment to assist. Financial assistance was given to our members for an array of reasons, including financial and personal loss due to hurricanes, emergency travel, funeral expenses and unexpected medical bills not covered by primary or supplemental insurance. Through generous contributions by our members and the return on investments, CGMA was able to expand the scope and eligibility of many of its education programs, including the addition of two new programs.

Campaign materials for retirees will be forwarded via direct mails. Individuals having any questions about CGMA, including programs offered, eligibility, or contributions should contact their nearest CGMA representative. Everyone is encouraged to visit the CGMA web-site at [www.cgmahq.org](http://www.cgmahq.org).

RADM F. L. Ames,  
Assistant Commandant For Human Resources

### **VETERANS TAKE NOTE OF OCTOBER 2000 PAY DATE**

Veterans who receive Veterans Administration (VA) benefit payments should note that October benefit payments will be delayed until 2 October 2000. The one-time delay is the result of the payment falling at the beginning of the fiscal year, creating a 13 month outlay for the year in which the 1 October payment is advanced. This would have been the case in FY2001, when 1 October 2000 falls on a Sunday. In accordance

with past procedures, veterans would expect to receive benefit payments on the preceding Friday, however, language in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 precludes advance payments in FY2001. Veterans are being advised of the delayed payment to allow for adequate personal financial planning.

An informed and active constituency is key to the success of grassroots campaigns. FRA encourages active duty, reserve, and retired Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen to stay up-to-date on military personnel issues and vote in local, state, and federal elections. The February issue of Naval Affairs includes a list of current bills before Congress, which impact military personnel, and a list of presidential primaries and Federal and State positions up for election

### **CHANGES TO TSP DELAYED**

A TSP plan was scheduled to be implemented in May of this year. Now, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board which oversees the federal Thrift Savings Plan has announced that the two new investment options will be delayed until October. TSP needs more time to test a new computer system. In addition to the new investments, the other new services planned for TSP such as daily transaction processing for payroll deductions and investments will also be delayed until October.

### **VA JOBS MAY BE UP FOR GRABS**

The VA has announced that it may bypass the A-76 competition phase and contract out up to 160,000 medical and administrative health care jobs. This represents a change from the VA's previous position that these jobs were exempt from being contracted out. At this time, VA is the only agency to decide to allow privatization without the competition that allows employees to compete with contractors for their jobs before any decision to outsource is made. Under the plan, hospital directors will have the authority to make contracting out decisions for their facility for jobs determined to be exempt from competition by the VA.

### **CENSUS JOBS AVAILABLE**

The Census Bureau is looking to hire several hundred thousand people to fill its short term, temporary need for staff to conduct the 2000 census. Current federal employees, as well as retired federal employees, are being encouraged to apply for the positions. Typically, federal agencies will allow part-time employment with the Census Bureau for current employees. To get more information about these positions, call toll-free at 1-888-325-7733, or check the Census Bureau website: <http://www.census.gov>.

## PENTAGON TARGETS 3.7% RAISE 2001

Early indications are that the fiscal 2001 defense budget will call for a 3.7 percent across-the-board pay raise for service members to take effect on January 1, 2001. The increase was derived using a formula set by Congress last Fall that the raise be greater than the average salary increase in the private sector. According to Labor Department statistics, that increase was 3.2% last year. The recommended raise will be part of the budget that the Pentagon sends to Congress in February and will likely be acceptable to lawmakers. Despite the continuing existence of a wage gap between military and private-sector wages, only a single pay raise is expected next year.

## VETERAN BENEFITS TO IMPROVE

Under a new law, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefit Act, veterans should see improvements in several areas. VA is supposed to improve access to long-term care for disabled veterans, along with other health care, educational and burial benefits. VA will also be looking into ways to provide a range of nursing and related care and to help families. Some of the specific provisions of the new law would extend the housing loan program for certain reserve members; let veterans to use their Montgomery GI Bill money for certain test prep courses; let VA pay emergency care costs for veterans receiving medical care from VA and will have VA look into establishing six new national cemeteries.



*CGC Alex Haley  
(WMEC 39)  
arrives in Kodiak  
November 1999*

## JUNEAU AND KETCHIKAN SERVICES

*CPO Curt Brownlow  
CCGD17 Juneau Alaska  
EKMS Manager/ISiC*

Unfortunately, there is not an exchange or commissary in Juneau, AK. We do have a small CG Clinic. The phone number for the CG Clinic in the Federal Building is (907) 463 2145. The ISC-Ketchikan Juneau Staff phone number is (907) 463-2176. They do have one CWO3 MWR staff and the phone number there is (907) 463-2117. Probably one of the best areas to gather info on the Juneau area is the World Wide Web. The site <http://www.juneau.com>.

## NCOA LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

The Internet is a powerful, persuasive tool in influencing the votes of legislators at all levels of government. Through the Internet and e-mail, electronic democracy allows you to "knock on the desktop" of the President, other government officials, and every member of Congress.

Browse the NCOA Action center [www.ncoausa.ibelong.com](http://www.ncoausa.ibelong.com). Check out the Write to Congress, Guide to Congress [www.congress.nw.dc.us/ncoai/](http://www.congress.nw.dc.us/ncoai/). Look at Current Legislation, Vote Scorecard, and Key Votes Spotlight <http://congress.nw.dc.us/cgi-bin/issue.pl?dir=ncoai>.

## RETIREMENT RELATED INTERNET LINKS

[www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil) – TRICARE Home Page – Medical Information  
[www.afpc.randolph.af.mil](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil) – AF Retired Pay Calculator – Retired Pay Calculator and other info.  
[www.uscg.mil/hq/hrsic](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/hrsic) – HRSIC – USCG HRSIC home page.  
[www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil) – Defense Finance Center – Various information related to retirement issues.  
[www.va.gov/](http://www.va.gov/) - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home page.  
[www.ssa.gov/](http://www.ssa.gov/) - Social Security Administration home page.  
[www.vba.va.gov/bln/ins/](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/ins/) - Serviceman's Group and Veteran's Group Life Insurance Info.

## COMMISSARIES ALLOW GUESTS

As of November 15, 1999, friend and relative may now accompany commissary customers into the store as their guests. The change is designed primarily as a convenience to authorized shoppers accompanied by close relative. However, guests are not allowed to make purchases. In order to ensure that only authorized users make purchases, commissary employees will check military identifications in the checkout line. Some commissaries may still check IDs at the door if installation commanders require it for security reasons.

## RETIREE INVOLVEMENT NEEDED

Help is needed to deluge Congress with letters, phone calls and e-mails in support of this goal. The TROA's Web site already identifies several key health care equity bills, notably H.R. 2966, introduced by Rep Ronnie Shows (D-MS) as the "Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act." While there are separate bills that address Medicare subvention (Rep. Hefley's (R-CO) H.R. 1413 and Sen. Gramm's (R-TX) S. 915) and FEHBP-65 (Rep. Moran's (D-VA) H.R. 205 and Rep. Cunningham's (R-CA) H.R. 113), Rep. Shows' bill is the only one introduced so far that would authorize Medicare-eligibles a choice of continuing Tricare coverage after age 65 or enrolling in FEHBP. For retirees who entered service before June 7, 1956, H.R. 2966 would provide this coverage without charge to the retiree. This year, TROA and The Military Coalition are sponsoring

a Western Union message campaign to provide members a quick, easy and inexpensive way to send the right message to their legislators. For members who have already written, called or e-mailed their legislators, this offers an additional vehicle to help ensure the government keeps its promises to uniformed services retirees-by using the Health Care Equity Hot Line to send mailgrams urging your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative to take immediate action on health care equity legislation.

Here's what you can do: Dial Western Union's toll-free Health Care Equity Hot Line number, 1-800-423-8440. The Hotline is open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Subscribers with Internet access can send the same mailgrams via TROA's Web Site at <http://www.troa.org/Legislative/HealthMailgram.asp>. Give the operator your full name, address and ZIP code, plus your major credit card number and expiration date. Ask the operator to send The Military Coalition's health care equity mailgrams to your elected officials. You don't need to know their names or addresses; Western Union will automatically send your messages to the right legislators. Three Western Union messages will be hand-delivered the following day to your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative. Messages will be tailored as appropriate to each legislator's cosponsor status. You will be billed \$6.75 on your Visa/MasterCard/American Express card (no other billing options are available). If you have any problems with the service or your bill, call Western Union at 1-800-336-3337, x6015, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

Some ask whether such standardized messages are effective. Clearly, they are nowhere near as effective as a hand-written individual letter. But volume counts, and past favorable experiences show that large volumes of such messages are very effective in winning cosponsors for key bills.

At present, no broad health care equity bill has been introduced in the Senate, but two or three bills are expected to be introduced shortly. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) announced Wednesday that he would introduce a Senate version of H.R. 2966 when Congress reconvenes January 25. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) also has expressed interest in introducing legislation that would provide Medicare-eligibles a choice of enrolling in Tricare Senior Prime, FEHBP-65 or participating in DoD retail and mail-order pharmacy programs (without any enrollment fee). Senate Armed Services Committee leaders also expect to seek Senate approval of a major health care bill (provisions to be determined) early in the year.

Until any such bills are introduced, the TMC Western Union campaign will send "generic" messages to all senators bringing H.R. 2966 to their attention and urging their support for enactment of broad legislation to achieve the long-standing health care equity goals of TROA and The Military Coalition: nationwide implementation of TRICARE eligibility/Medicare subvention and FEHBP-65, with options for prescription drug coverage for Medicare-eligibles. Western Union campaign messages will be adjusted as needed to urge cosponsorship of all introduced bills that meet these goals.



The COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST is interested in sending out their newsletter via e-mail versus delivery by the U.S. Postal Service to save money. If you are willing to receive your copy of this newsletter by e-mail, please complete the below permission slip and return it to our office.

Mail the below "tear off memo to:  
 COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST  
 USCG Integrated Support Command Worklife (Retiree Council)  
 1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1  
 Seattle, Washington 98134

- Yes I am interest in receiving the RETIREE NEWSLETTER by e-mail in the future. I have included my home e-mail address below.
- Yes you may make my home e-mail address available to other USCG retirees. *(If you do not give this permission, we will only use the e-mail address for the Newsletter. Under no circumstances will your address be given out for commercial use.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

My Email Address is  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# Retiree Council Members

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