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National VP for Retired Personnel

Over the past year or so, the Association has presented a pile of information to our valued retirees. So, just in case you missed some of this important information, we are presenting an abbreviated summary.

KEEP DEERS UPDATED

You or a family member could temporarily lose medical benefits if you do not update your information on the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS). DEERS stores medical benefit data for Active military, retirees, and eligible family members. Retirees are the sponsors for their family members' medical benefits and are responsible for the accuracy of the DEERS information. Correct, up-to-date DEERS information is essential since this data defines your medical benefits.

Making changes to DEERS is easy to do. You can make changes through your military support office, the same office that assists you with your ID card. If you are making changes, it's a good idea to take documentation with you, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or birth certificate.

Just In Case You Missed It

By Tom McAtee

For DEERS address changes, four options exist:

1. To make address changes or to verify data on-line, log on to the Defense Manpower Data Center Web site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/index.jsp>.

2. Call the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) Telephone Center at 1-800-538-9552. The best time to call is between 0900-1500 (Pacific Time) Wednesday through Friday to avoid delays.

3. Fax address change to 1-831-655-8317.

4. Mail the change information to the DSO, ATTN: COA; 400 Gigling Road; Seaside, CA 93955-6771.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSET PHASE OUT

Congress has eliminated the 20 percent decrease in spouse annuities. The "offset" will be phased out over a three-and-one-half year period. Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) survivor benefits formally subject to the offset will increase to 40 percent of base amount on 1 October 2005. Future increases occur on 1 April 2006 (to 45 percent), 1 April 2007 (to 50 percent), and 1 April 2008 (final increase to 55 percent).

SBP OPEN SEASON COMING

It was felt that restoring the 20 percent back to SBP annuity payments would make the SBP program more attractive. Therefore, legislation has been provided

for an open season for one year beginning 1 October 2005. There will be a "late enrollment" penalty applied to annual premiums for those who enroll during the open enrollment period. Watch for details.

DEPENDENT OR SURVIVOR ID CARD CHANGE

If you are a dependent or survivor and age 75 or over, and have an ID card that will expire soon, your new ID card will be PERMANENT. This change in law will end the inconvenience of going through the ID card renewal every four years.

SUPPLEMENTAL SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SSBP) PREMIUMS END

Those retired members over age 60 who previously elected 5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, or 20 percent SSBP to compensate for the Social Security offset will no longer have the SSBP premium deducted from their retirement pay. Effective 1 November 2004, the SSBP premium stopped. Even though the premium ceases, the supplemental coverage you originally elected will continue. The end of the SSBP premium and continued coverage were both part of the Survivor Benefit Plan legislative changes enacted by the FY2005 NDAA. After 1 April 2008, survivor annuity, regardless of age, will be 55 percent of the insured retired pay amount. CAUTION! DO NOT MISTAKE THIS FOR REGULAR SBP PREMIUMS. ⚠