

his role in the Malmedy massacre of American POWs at the Battle of the Bulge. I am proud to honor Michel Thomas for his heroism.

On Memorial Day, it is fitting that we honor all the men and women of the Armed Forces who have served their nation throughout history including those who are currently risking their lives around the world, including in Afghanistan and Iraq. I have been to both countries twice and have visited with soldiers from New York and across the country. I especially want to note the contributions of the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum under General Austin's leadership, and the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Division of the New York Army National Guard, located in my district, who just shipped out to Iraq on Monday. While they are serving in Iraq, I will be fighting to pass legislation to ensure that they receive full military retirement credit for their days of service at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

I am pleased to note that today we are passing legislation to correct a longstanding inequity in survivor benefits for the spouses of our fallen veterans. The "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005" provides for a 5-year phase-in to eliminate the Widow's Tax. This unfair tax penalizes the widows and widowers of military retirees by reducing their Survivor Benefit Plan benefit from 55 percent of the retiree's pension to 35 percent once they reach age 62, normally the same age she or he is eligible for Social Security. The Social Security benefit the surviving spouse receives is often less than the reduction in the benefit, which results in a net loss of income. This legislation brings long overdue relief to the surviving spouses.

I will continue to support the members of Armed Forces in every way that I can. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude which we can never repay. They helped to make this country what it is today, and they have brought peace to other nations across the globe.

I would like to thank my colleagues from New York Representatives RANGEL and WALSH for organizing today's moment of silence for America's fallen soldiers.

HONORING THE FRATERNAL
ORDER OF EAGLES AERIE 629
(DORT HIGHWAY)

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to bring to your attention that during the month of February 2004 the Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 629 (Dort Highway) of Flint, Michigan celebrated their 100th year of brotherhood.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles formerly known as the "Seattle Order of Good Things" was founded in Seattle, Washington on February 6, 1898. The organization's informal slogan is "People Helping People" (F. Hector Gauthier, North Uxbridge, Mass.) Six short years later, on February 17, 1904 the Flint Dort Highway Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 629 chapter was chartered with 61 members. Former Flint Mayor George McKinley was the chapter's first President and Floyd Simson a Pharmacist/Drugstore owner was the Sec-

retary. The club held meetings in the old Woolworth building twice a month until they relocated to the 2nd floor of the State Theater in June of 1905. In 1907 they moved to Castel Hall where they occupied the entire 3rd floor. As the organization's location changed so did its membership. In 1938 their Auxiliary was chartered with 71 members while located at the Smith and Waters building, which was purchased from Dort Motor Company in 1922. The club added a 10,000 square foot addition to the building which they called home until a fire destroyed the building and forced them to move to the second floor of the Samons building located at First and Garland. They remained there until 1980 when they purchased the building known as the Freeman Ice Cream Building. The organization began remodeling efforts immediately, with most of the work being done by its members. The building was completed in 1981 and a banquet hall was added just in time for their 1984 District Wide Initiation. New candidates from all the clubs in District Four were initiated during the event. The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an organization committed to the American people. Throughout its 100 years, they have strived on a daily basis to make this country a better place for all. This is an extraordinary club of men working for the betterment of our nation. I am proud to say that there is a chapter in my hometown of Flint addressing the needs of my community.

Mr. Speaker, many people have greatly benefited from the generosity of these fine men. They are indeed men of moral character committed to improving the welfare and dignity of those in need. I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me in paying tribute to the Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 629 (Dort Highway) Flint Chapter as they celebrate 100 years of solid brotherhood and in wishing them the very best in future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE MERCURY
NEWS FOR ITS ARTICLE "DIS-
COUNT CARD DOUBT"

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding piece of journalism that appeared in The Mercury News in San Jose, California. The article, "Discount Card Doubt" presents the realistic confusion Medicare beneficiaries face in choosing a discount card. As the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and individual card sponsors bombard beneficiaries with glossy marketing materials, I am proud to know that my constituents are receiving a fair and balanced account of the drug card debacle. I would like to thank Barbara Feder Ostrov for her exceptional reporting, and for informing the people of my district about the benefits and dangers of the Medicare approved drug discount card program.

It is with pleasure that I submit the attached article, "Discount Card Doubt," for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The article originally appeared in the May 26, 2004 edition of The Mercury News.

DISCOUNT CARD DOUBT

COMPLICATED SYSTEM: CHOOSING ONE OF 73
PLANS IS A HASSLE, SENIORS SAY

(By Barbara Feder Ostrov)

Betty Cozzi is trying to keep an open mind about the new Medicare discount cards. Last week, she dutifully sat through a presentation with a nice lady showing PowerPoint slides at Cambrian Center, the San Jose senior apartment complex where she lives.

But the whole thing is pretty annoying, in her view.

"They've made it so complicated," said Cozzi, who is 71. "We should be able to sit down and read the information without being talked to like we're second-graders. And I don't even know if the card will help me."

As Medicare drug discount cards go "live" next Tuesday, seniors like Cozzi are wading through a swamp of conflicting and sometimes downright inaccurate information as they assess which card they want to buy—that is, if they want to buy one at all.

The cards, which offer Medicare recipients discounts on both brand-name and generic prescription drugs, are the first of a series of Medicare prescription drug reforms providing temporary relief from rising medication costs until a larger benefit takes effect in 2006.

Some cards are free, while others can cost up to \$30. They offer discounts of 15 percent to 20 percent on the average retail prices for brand-name drugs, with deeper discounts of 30 percent to 60 percent on generics, according to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, the federal agency that oversees Medicare.

About 3.2 million seniors in California could benefit from the discount cards, saving about \$515 million on their medications in 2004 and 2005, the years when the cards will be available, according to a study released last week by the Business Roundtable, a trade group for chief executives of large corporations. The study also found that about 105,000 California seniors will qualify for a \$600-a-year credit for low-income people that can be applied toward drug purchases made with the cards in 2004 and 2005.

But seniors may find deeper discounts purchasing from Canadian pharmacies, U.S.-based mail order houses or even Costco, as a Mercury News analysis of 10 common drugs shows (see chart).

NOT MUCH SAVINGS

A little-known state program in which participating pharmacies offer prescription drug discounts to California Medicare recipients was the most expensive option for some drugs, the analysis shows.

Cozzi, a retired executive secretary, isn't poor enough to qualify for the \$600-a-year credit, but her income is limited enough that she only takes Plavix, an expensive drug that prevents strokes and heart attacks, every other day, rather than the daily dose her doctor recommends.

Plavix, which isn't available as a cheaper generic, can cost nearly \$1,500 annually, and Cozzi must also take other medications like Lipitor, which can cost an additional \$800-plus each year. She tries to save money by ordering her drugs through a U.S. mail-order service offered by her supplemental Medicare insurance.

Cozzi said she is just starting to research which Medicare discount card might be best for her, but it's a trying endeavor. There are 73 different Medicare-approved cards, and every one covers different drugs, with pricing that can change weekly. Once Cozzi buys a card, she won't be able to buy a different one this year.

She has a few options: She can call (800) MEDICARE and ask a representative which