



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY RETIREE COUNCIL
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF G-1
300 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

DAPE-HRR

27 April 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council Report

1. The fifty-second meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council was held at the Pentagon, 23-27 April 2012. The Council is established in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-7, "Retirement Services Program" and is administered in accordance with its charter, which is approved by the Secretary of the Army. The Council represents slightly over one million by Retirees and Surviving Spouses.
2. The Council members reviewed and discussed 16 issues submitted by 8 Installation Retiree Councils. The issues submitted by Installation Retiree Councils, with Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council comments are at Enclosure 1.
3. The Council's report to the Chief of Staff, Army is at Enclosure 2.

KENNETH O. PRESTON
Sergeant Major of the Army
U.S. Army, Retired
Co-Chairman

FREDERICK E. VOLLRATH
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army, Retired
Co-Chairman

2 Enclosures

1. Installation Report
2. Annual Report of the CSA Retiree Council

DISTRIBUTION:
SPECIAL

ISSUE: 01-01-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Express Scripts Contract

DISCUSSION: A letter from TRICARE's Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM), Express Scripts, indicated that Walgreens Pharmacies [a pharmacy provider (PP)] would no longer be a TRICARE PP as of 31 December 2011. A letter from Walgreens indicated that (Walgreens and Express Scripts) were unable to reach an agreement despite concerted efforts by Walgreens' TRICARE's PBM's largest PP. This decision will have an adverse impact on active/reserve/ retiree families. Impact includes loss of access and close proximity to nearby pharmacy services, interrupted pharmacy care. Prescription record transfer could disrupt prescription services of the TRICARE beneficiaries (active/reserve/retiree families).

RECOMMENDATION: CSA Retiree Council support that TRICARE's PBM, Express Scripts, should negotiate for DoD TRICARE recipients (active/reserve/retiree families) only and not endeavor to combine TRICARE negotiations with those of other commercial interests

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

FACTS: TRICARE has a contract with Express Scripts Inc (ESI) that includes ESI delivering a retail pharmacy network that meets access standards set out in the contract. TRICARE's contract with ESI requires a robust pharmacy network and does not engage in negotiations between ESI and retail pharmacies. The contract uses the ESI commercial network, versus creating a unique network, as is consistent with industry best practices. Careful analysis has been done to ensure TRICARE-ESI network access standards are maintained with the Walgreens' decision to withdraw as an ESI participating pharmacy. The data shows access standards to be in compliance. TRICARE recognizes that beneficiaries will have to change if previously using Walgreens and they desire to continue using a network retail pharmacy. There are 56,000 other TRICARE network pharmacies available for beneficiaries who were using Walgreens, along with Home Delivery and the MTF pharmacies. Approximately 99% of the beneficiaries affected will have an alternative retail pharmacy network within five miles, the majority averaging within one half (1/2) mile. An extensive information and education effort targeted to beneficiaries having filled prescriptions at Walgreens has helped ensure minimal disruption so far. All data to date supports an ongoing, but smooth implementation of Walgreens decision to no longer participate as a network pharmacy. Letters, print and electronic media have been used to ensure beneficiaries have access to options and are able to choose a retail network, home delivered mail service or MTF pharmacy option to meet their needs.

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS:

The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council does not support this issue, but does support the Fort Stewart Retiree Council's concern for military retirees.

ISSUE: 01-02-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Leonard Wood, MO

SUBJECT: Proposal to Change TRICARE FOR LIFE Fees

DISCUSSION: In recent months there have been several recommendations to make drastic changes to TRICARE fees. The Congressional Budget Office recommended that retirees be barred from using TRICARE Prime. In addition, another recommendation was for TRICARE for life beneficiaries to pay an annual TRICARE fee of \$200.00 per year in conjunction with MEDICARE Part "B". These drastic changes to TRICARE would jeopardize the quality of life for many military retirees.

RECOMMENDATION: Most military retirees agree that TRICARE fees should be increased to a level not to exceed their annual cost of living allowance. However, TRICARE for life retirees should not be required to pay any fees since they must have MEDICARE Part "B." Military retirees need the support of the Army leadership to be their voice on this issue.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: CSM (Ret) Julius B. Nutter, Co-Chairman, Ft Leonard Wood, MO Retiree Council

FACTS: DoD is proposing to institute a new annual enrollment fee for TRICARE For Life (TFL) individuals. The enrollment fee is based on a three tier system of retired pay. Tier One would be \$0-\$22,589; Tier Two would be \$22,250 - \$45,178 and Tier Three would be \$45,179 and above. Starting in FY13, based on these retired pay tiers, annual individual enrollment fees would start at \$35 for Tier One, \$75 for Tier Two and \$115 for Tier Three. Fees would then increase to \$75, \$150, and \$225 for FY 2014 and \$115, \$225, and \$335 in FY 2015 respectively based on the retired pay tiers and in 2016 would indexed to medical inflation. Enacted in 2001, TFL acts as a second payer for Medicare beneficiaries similar to Medigap coverage.

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council concurs with this issue. To earn their health coverage in retirement, military retirees paid a huge upfront premium of service. The promise of health care for Soldiers and their Families has been published for years in print media, i.e. DA PAM 600-5, Army Benefits Brochure (Nov 91), US DoD fact sheet FA 38 HASC# 93-70 93rd Congress (Oct 74), and full page ads in the Army, AF, and Navy Times. Soldiers stay in service on the promise by their own government that if they serve 20 years or more in uniform, they and their Families will receive health care for life. Medicare-eligible Soldiers and spouses are required to pay for Medicare Part B which is about \$1500 per person (\$3000 for married couples) per year in order to have TRICARE FOR LIFE. Health care benefits are delayed compensation. Placing an additional financial burden on retired Soldiers is a breach of a moral contract signed by DoD when recruiting Soldiers.

Enrollment fees for retirees should never be tied to medical inflation. Medical inflation continues to rise faster than the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers used to increase military retired pay. Tying enrollment fees to the medical inflation rate creates no incentive for the medical system to cut costs, streamline performance, and improve prevention programs.

ISSUE: 01-03-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Limit TRICARE Fee Increases

DISCUSSION: TRICARE Prime and prescription fees have recently increased. Further fee increases should be prevented from occurring. Current legislation could impact other related TRICARE fees. As an example, congressional legislation has proposed a \$200 annual fee for TFL. These possible fee increases will have undesirable impacts on all retirees. Additionally, no fee increases for individual participation in any program should exceed a set percentage of a retiree's COLA.

RECOMMENDATION: CSA Retiree Council supports TRICARE fees and/or prescription increases should never exceed the active/reserve/ retiree's COLA percent increase.

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council
SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

FACTS: In FY12 the TRICARE Prime annual enrollment fee was increased from \$230 to \$260 for an individual and \$460 to \$520 for a family. Cost increases as approved by Congress were indexed to a cost of living index vice a medical inflation rate. In their proposed FY13 Budget, DoD is proposing to raise TRICARE Prime Annual Enrollment Fees for working age retirees under age 65. The enrollment fee is based on a three tier system of retired pay. Tier One would be \$0-\$22,589; Tier Two would be \$22,250 - \$45,178 and Tier Three would be \$45,179 and above. In FY13, fees would increase from \$520 for Family to \$600 in Tier One, increase from \$520 to \$720 in Tier Two and increase from \$520 to \$820 in Tier Three. Fees would then increase to \$680, \$920, and \$1,120 for FY 2014 and \$760, \$1,185, and \$1,535 in FY 2015 respectively based on the retired pay tiers and in 2016 would indexed to medical inflation. Individual fees would be 50% of family fees. Subsequent fee increases would be indexed to medical inflation.

Pharmacy fees would also increase for all beneficiaries with the exception of active duty soldiers. In FY 13, brand retail co-pays increase from \$12 to \$26 with limited availability of non-formulary medications. Mail order Brand co-pays increase from \$9 to \$26 and Non-formulary increases from \$25 to \$51.

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff Retiree Council Supports this issue.

TRICARE is an earned benefit. It is an integral part of a moral contract, a practical fulfillment of the Nation's promise to those who honorably served a career in the Uniformed Services. The Council recommends that ANY future TRICARE increases should never exceed the retired pay COLA.

Using a 3 Tier System is another name for means testing, which is used in various welfare programs, social insurance programs, and other UNEARNED benefits that are provided as a government gift or safety net for those in need. Military health care benefits are NOT a gift. Service and sacrifice constitute the military's (enormous) prepaid premiums. Tiering is punishing those who served the longest and most successfully. It is estimated that 99% of non-DoD health plans do not use a tiered or means testing system. DoD civilian health plans also do not use income levels to determine different premium rates.

Enrollment fees for retirees should never be tied to medical inflation. Medical inflation continues to rise faster than the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers used to increase military retired pay. Tying enrollment fees to the medical inflation rate creates no incentive for the medical system to cut costs, streamline performance, and improve prevention programs.

ISSUE: 02-04-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA

SUBJECT: Allow Medical Retirements Temporary and Permanent (Chapter 61 retirements) to use the on post Child Care Services for 6 months after retirement.

DISCUSSION: Army Medical Retirements, Temporary and Permanent retirees are not allowed to use the on post Child Day Care services after their effective retirement date. The problem this creates is that a medical retiree is normally informed that he/she will be placed on the retirement list within 2 to 3 months prior to his/her actual retirement date. At this stage of the process the retiree has not actively been searching for employment because he/she does not know when they will retire. The next stage of the process is out processing and most of the time the retiree must sell his/her leave or lose it in order to be out of the Army on their retirement date. The retirement date is established by Department of the Army and cannot be changed. As a result the Medical retiree has not been able to peruse finding employment and now needs Day Care while they are attending interviews. The other situation is that retires Medical problem is such that he and his spouse must take time for many doctors appointments. Now more than ever they need Child Care Services at an affordable rate so that they and their spouses can pursue employment.

RECOMMENDATION: Strongly urge a change to the regulation which would allow Medical Retires access to on post Child Care Services for 6 months after effective retirement date.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

EUGENE L. DANIEL
Major General, U.S. Army Retired
Fort Lewis Retiree Council Co-Chairman

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Army Staff (OACSIM) is considering regulatory or policy change to extend medical retirees access to on-post child care services for six months after their effective retirement dates. OACSIM has granted this exception on a case-by-case basis for JBLM Soldiers and would favorably consider future requests until current policy is changed.

The CSA Retiree Council further recommends that the policies should be permanently changed and that we support all available childcare services for up to six months for children of Soldiers being medically retired. Children of Army medical retirees, temporary and permanent, are not authorized on-post child care services after the Soldiers effective retirement date. Generally, the privatized property management partners allow the military family to reside on the installation for up to six months after medical retirement. Accordingly, extended child care services for an additional six months would significantly help medically Retired Soldiers and their Families as they transition.

ISSUE: 02-05-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Full Restoration of Concurrent Receipt for Chapter 61 Disability Retirees with less than 20 years of service.

DISCUSSION: Enfranchise those 200,000 members of the Armed Forces who were retired for medical disability with less than 20 years of service under Title 10 US Code, Chapter 61, to draw both their VA disability compensation and their earned military retirement pay under CRDP.

Such enfranchisement for retirees to receive both their VA compensation and their earned military pay would be consistent with the current economic stimulation policies. Concurrent Receipt is not a benefit, it is an entitlement. It is a debt owed and years overdue. If the disability was combat-related, these retirees were enfranchised for CRSC with the 2008 NDAA.

RECOMMENDATION: That the CSA Retiree Council support full retired benefits and disability compensation be provided to all retired military personnel regardless of their disability rating and years of service.

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council
SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Army Staff has commented that as of June 2010, there were 10,841 medically-retired service members with a VA disability rating of 50% or higher who are currently ineligible for CRDP. Over the next 10 years (FY 2012-FY 2021), the estimated cost to DoD for extending CRDP to medically-retired service members with less than 20 years active service and a VA service connected disability of 50% or more is \$4.0 billion, of which \$1.7 billion is the cost to the Army. Legislative proposals H.R. 333, 186, 1979, and S. 344 have been introduced in the 112th Congress. This legislation, if enacted, would provide the relief requested. However, all proposals include additional provisions not related to the scope of this proposal and would cost \$23.6 billion over the next 10 years, of which \$10.1 billion would be the cost to the Army.

Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy indicated that for the previous two years, DoD supported extending CRDP to medical retirees with less than 20 years active service at the direction of the White House. However, this year the White House did not direct DoD to support this initiative and DoD did not address it with Congress. At this time, DOD is seeking neither the further expansion of the CRDP program nor the repeal of the VA offset.

The CSA Retiree Council supports full restoration of Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay for Chapter 61 Disability Retirees with less than 20 years of service.

ISSUE: 02-06-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Equal Employment Opportunity for Spouses of Military Retirees

DISCUSSION: Provide spouses of military retirees an equal opportunity to seek employment as specified for a spouse of a member of the armed forces serving on active duty who has orders specifying a permanent change of station (not for training) established by Executive Order 13473. Department of the Army job announcements are unfair to spouses of military retirees seeking employment.

Situation: An enlisted retired soldier and his spouse, at the Fort Stewart RAD, stated that the spouse had been seeking employment with the Department of the Army for a very long time, but was not being given any consideration for employment since she was not eligible based on the categories of who may apply for a position. The couple stated that they thought it was unfair to a spouse of a retiree to not be given the same consideration of an active duty spouse. The retired enlisted soldier stated he had retired many years ago, but was receiving a small retirement payment with a small medical disability rating from the VA, which was not enough to live on. He had sustained an injury on a civilian job, wanted to continue to work, but was unable to and had been unemployed for a while. The spouse stated she had returned to school to get a college degree to help her get a better paying job and assist her family. The spouse stated she was just trying to get the same opportunity as an active duty spouse to help her family.

Providing equal employment opportunities to spouses of military retirees allows organizations and units the ability to expand hiring of skilled employees, minimize disruption of employee turnover due to permanent change of station, and provide stability and continuity to the civilian workforce.

The spouse of a military retiree should have an opportunity to be eligible for appointment of employment for a maximum of three (3) years from the date the spouse registers with a CPAC, since the spouse of a retiree will not receive continuous opportunities at employment as afforded to an active duty spouse based upon different PCS orders. Documentation requirements should include a copy of the retiree retirement orders and a certificate of marriage or license; authenticating the spouse was married to the retiree prior to retirement. Finally, many spouses of active duty service members that are now retired were not given an opportunity for employment as authorized by Executive Order 13473, since the effective date was September 11, 2009.

RECOMMENDATION: That the CSA Retiree Council support expanding the definitions of the "Who May Apply" category on job announcements to include the spouse of a military retiree; thereby, providing a fair and equal opportunity to a spouse of a military retiree seeking employment.

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Army Staff has provided the following comment, which the CSA Retiree Council takes under advisement. "Spouses of retired military personnel do not receive appointment eligibility under Executive Order (E.O.) 13473. It is the policy of the United States to provide for the appropriately expedited recruitment and selection of spouses of members of the Armed Forces for appointment to positions in the competitive service of the Federal civil service as part of the effort of the United States to recruit and retain in military service, skilled and experienced members of the Armed Forces and to recognize and honor the service of such members injured, disabled, or killed in connection with their service. The purpose of E.O. 13473 is to minimize disruptions in military families due to permanent relocations, disability and deaths resulting from active duty service. To achieve this, the provisions of this E.O. authorize an appointing authority for certain military spouses to positions in the competitive service. E.O. 13473 does not confer a hiring preference (e.g., Military Spouse Preference); it merely provides for a Military Spouse who has no other appointing authority, to be able to compete with "status" candidates on merit promotion/internal announcements.

The CSA Council recommends that the hiring of active duty spouses continue as provided by Executive Order. However, we would also recommend that when opportunity presents itself spouses of retired members be given preference over civilian applicants if the positions advertised cannot be filled by active duty spouses. Disability ratings of the Retired Soldiers should be a consideration in the hiring hierarchy of the spouse of a retired member.

ISSUE: 02-07-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Leonard Wood, MO

SUBJECT: Proposal to Eliminate Federal Subsidy for Military Commissaries and Directing Consolidation of all DOD Commissaries and Exchanges

DISCUSSION: The Commissary subsidy is one of the Army's best compensation values for Military retirees. Military retirees save an average of 31% by shopping in the commissary and an average of over 20% by shopping in the exchanges. These savings to military retirees were a tremendous benefit over the last three years based on them not receiving an increase in the cost of living allowance.

RECOMMENDATION: Senior Leadership of the Army must be very vocal against the reduction of subsidy for commissaries and the consolidation of exchanges.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: CSM (Ret) Julius B. Nutter, Co-Chairman, Ft Leonard Wood, MO Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The CSA RC recognizes the great value and compensation of the commissary to the military. If the proposal to reduce or consolidate commissaries arises, the Army should oppose such a move. Exchange facilities do not fit with commissaries and should be considered differently.

ISSUE: 02-08-2012

ASCC COUNCIL: Army in Europe

SUBJECT: Reduced Rates at Army Lodging for Retiree Appreciation Day Participants

DISCUSSION: Overnight lodging rates at Army guest houses are now at a point that many military retirees and annuitants cannot afford the set charges. An informal survey has determined that the daily rates (official and leisure) are hovering between 80 to 120 dollars with the latter the rule rather than the exception. The cost is often too high for older retirees on fixed income.

It has been determined that MWR sets most rates based on the area per diem rate or, for new facilities, on a return-on-investment calculation. Garrison Commanders do not have the authority to offer reduced rates. Many of the older retirees recall a time when the Military Guest House offered accommodations far below the cost of off-post hotels. Rate reductions for Retired Soldiers attending Retiree Appreciation Day events would encourage attendance by those who live at some distance from the host garrison.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide reduced rates in Army Lodging Facilities for Retired Soldiers participating in Retiree Appreciation Days in recognition of their contributions - past, present and future.

APPROVED BY ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: COL (Ret) Robert Mentell, President, Army in Europe Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS:

The Army Staff commented that they do not recommend the Army provide a discounted rate for one group of individuals over another.

Army Staff comments further, "Hotels under the Privatized Army Lodging (PAL) program now pay for utilities and many other services which were supported by Army Appropriated Funds when these hotels were in the Army inventory. The rate for official travelers is capped at 75% of the local per diem, while rates for unofficial travelers in PAL hotels are adjusted to be competitive with comparable hotels in the local area. These rates will allow the entire Army lodging inventory to be recapitalized in a very short period of time with continuous sustainment over the next 50 years.

Recommend that retiree councils engage their local PAL hotel operators in the US to discuss discounted rates to veterans for installation-sanctioned, officially-sponsored retiree events. Typically weekends are when PAL hotels have capacity and the local hotel management can address these rate issues. The inquiry for this issue came from Europe where there is no Privatized Lodging. The Army is setting the rates for the Army hotels in Europe."

The CSA Retiree Council concurs with the Army Staff's recommendation relative to PAL hotel facilities and recognizes that there is an opportunity to negotiate lower group rates for groups such as the Retiree population when attending RADs or other functions.

ISSUE: 02-09-2012

ASCC COUNCIL: Army in Europe

SUBJECT: Postal Support to Retired Service Members thru Overseas MPOs

DISCUSSION: The DoD restriction on the weight Retired Service Members can receive and send through Military Post Office (MPOs) overseas remains the top Quality of Life issue for the approximately 4,640 Retired Service Members residing in the USEUCOM AOR who are Retiree Post Office boxes (Box-R) holders.

The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council has repeatedly supported the amendment of DoD military postal system rules to authorize mail privileges for Box R patrons for parcels up to five pounds, unless further restricted by host governments. The Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council and the Chief of Staff, Air Force, Retiree Council have also supported increasing the limit to 5 pounds.

The Military Postal Services Agency (MPSA) and some of the services have stated that the primary obstacle to raising the current 16-ounce limit is the increased Second Destination Transportation (SDT) costs (the cost of transporting the mail from CONUS to or from the overseas theater). This cost is initially borne by OSD but then reimbursed by the services.

An alternative to OSD bearing the SDT costs would be to have the Box-R patron pay both the inbound and outbound SDT costs. This would be in addition to the US Postal Service (USPS) postage to cover the mailing costs in CONUS.

Under this concept, mail up to 16-ounces would continue to be mailed at no additional charge. Box R patrons would be required to pay a per-pound amount to cover the SDT rate for mail exceeding 16 ounces.

- For parcels mailed from an overseas MPO, the Box-R patron would pay the USPS postage plus rounded-up SDT rate per pound to mail a parcel.
- For parcels received in an overseas MPS for a Box-R patron, the Box-R patron would be required to pay the rounded-up SDT rate per pound to receive the parcel.

Host Nations restrictions, such as on the value of in-coming parcels, would still apply.

To ensure that any increase in mail volumes that may result from this revision does not overburden the capability to handle the mail in the overseas theater, the limit should be raised 5-pounds initially. After a one-year period, consideration should be given to raising the limit higher or eliminating it altogether as OSD would bear none of the SDT costs whatever the parcel weight might be.

RECOMMENDATION: Support the revision of the DoD Manual to implement these revised procedures for the payment of SDT costs and to raise the weight limit to five-pounds

APPROVED BY ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: COL (Ret) Robert Mentell, President, Army in Europe Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Army Staff has made the following comments: "The military postal service (MPS) has supported the overseas military retiree community for over 60 years, providing 16 ounce mail privileges at military post offices (MPO) worldwide. Unfortunately, broadening this privilege is not supportable at this time due to a lack of legislative authority, cost increases amidst budget constraints within the Department of Defense (DoD), and host nation limitations.

DoD has determined that the current policy which limits military retirees to less than sixteen ounces per item of mail service through the MPS should remain. This policy was established to control the costs of mail transportation and to comply with Status of Forces Agreements with our host nations. Overseas MPOs provide limited mail services to retirees on space-available basis because it is at minimal cost.

However, this is done as a matter of policy in the absence of specific legislative authority or specified funding. DoD previously formally considered and denied requests to increase the mail weight limit in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2010. The basis for denying these requests, increased costs, workload, manpower requirements and lack of legislative authorities, have not changed.

More recently, allowing military retirees parcel service will result in transportation costs quickly multiplying as, once granted, there is no viable means to limit the volume and quantity of mailings to and from retirees abroad. Due to a lack of legislative authorization and appropriations, DoD funding and resource constraints, and host nation limitation DoD cannot endorse the pilot program for increasing retiree weight limits."

The CSA Retiree Council recommends this issue be moved forward as an unresolved issue warranting further study.

ISSUE: 02-10-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Presidio of Monterey, CA (Ft. Ord Area Retiree Council)

SUBJECT: Expiration of Retiree Education Benefits

DISCUSSION: Educational benefits for Veterans expire too soon after retirement. This benefit should last indefinitely. Upon retirement, the focus is on moving, resettling Families and establishing a new career in the civilian work force. This can take many years, by which time, educational benefits may have expired causing retirees to lose this earned benefit.

RECOMMENDATION: Extend the number of years that educational benefits may be utilized or make them an indefinite benefit for the Service Members/Retirees who have earned them.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):
BG (Ret) Barton Gilbert, Chair, Ft. Ord Area Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS:

The Army Staff commented: "Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 , Title 38 U.S.C.), Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30, Title 38 U.S.C.), and Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606, Title 10 U.S.C.) are governed by Public Law. The programs have a delimiting date (expiration of benefits). As a general rule, Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits extend 15 years from the date of last release from active duty and Montgomery GI Bill benefits eligibility extends 10 years from the date of last discharge or release from active duty. Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve benefits do not have a delimiting date; however, benefits begin on the date the Soldier becomes entitled and remain in effect while in Selected Reserve status.

Army Continuing Education Services does not have data to determine whether the delimiting date is too restrictive based on the number of Service members who do not use the benefit. VA tracks this information."

The VA commented that they are committed to helping beneficiaries pursue their educational goals by providing GI Bill benefits in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Currently, VA is not aware of any proposed legislation concerning delimiting dates, nor have they received requests for formal views/costs on this issue. Consequently, VA declined to provide a position on delimiting date extensions.

The CSA Retiree Council supports the extension of Retiree Education Benefits without an end date. Extension of such benefits will require legislation to amend current law.

ISSUE: 02-11-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK Retiree Council

SUBJECT: Space A Travel on Military Aircraft for Surviving Spouses

DISCUSSION: Upon a retiree's death the surviving spouse is no longer eligible to travel on military aircraft as a Space A traveler.

RECOMMENDATION: Request that the policy be changed to allow unremarried surviving spouses of retirees to fly Space A on military aircraft at Category VI.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):
CMS (Ret) Emmet Heidemann, Chairman, Alaska Retiree Council, JBER Elmendorf-Richardson

IMCOM HQ/REGION COMMENTS:

ARMY STAFF COMMENTS:

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The CSA Retiree Council recommends that the contributions of Surviving Spouses continue to be recognized by authorizing travel for them on military aircraft on a Space A basis at a lower category than existing categories. This will deliver a strong message to our surviving spouses and the Army as a whole that the Army has not forgotten the service of their spouse and the sacrifice of the spouses.

ISSUE: 03-12-2012

ASCC COUNCIL: Army in Europe, Tobyhanna Army Depot

SUBJECT: Issuance of Smartcards to Retiring Soldiers

DISCUSSION: For good reasons, the Army is planning to restrict access to Army Knowledge on Line only to CAC holders – a group to which very few Retired Soldiers belong.

The expressed intention is to provide an entirely new Army portal with password access called GTSY for Soldiers, Friends, Family and Retirees to socialize and network.

What the new portal does not appear to provide is an authoritative source of essential information that Retired Soldiers need to know. Moreover, there are elements of information that the Army is legally responsible for ensuring that Retired Soldiers receive them.

While many Retired Soldiers are not used to using AKO and might find it cumbersome, Retiring Soldiers have become accustomed using AKO to access just such information and are considerably more computer literate, in general, than their retired counterparts.

Retiring Soldiers would be able to continue to access AKO (and other pertinent websites), if they were issued a Smartcard at transition. If, after the 3-year period that the Smartcard is valid, they do not find they have a need for it, they can simply allow it to expire and not request a new one.

Issuance of Smartcards to Retired Soldiers should be based on the results of the on-going Army Spouse and Retiree Smartcard Pilot program.

Continued access to AKO immediately following transition would facilitate that process. Moreover, the Army could more easily contact Retiring Soldiers during this critical period of transition into retirement.

RECOMMENDATION: Issue Smartcards to Retiring Soldiers during transition into retirement.

APPROVED BY ASCC/INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

COL (Ret) Robert Mentell, President, Army in Europe Retiree Council

COL (Ret) Edward J. Burke, Co-Chairman, Tobyhanna Army Depot Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Army agrees a solution to provide Retirees and Families access to critical information after retiring is important. The Army is currently concluding a limited pilot at five installations to evaluate the recommendation. The Smartcard Pilot has been ongoing since AUG 2011 and is scheduled to end in SEP 2012 when a recommendation will be provided to and a decision made by the Vice Chief of Staff, Army (VCSA) about providing Common Access Cards (CAC) to Retirees. Preliminary indications show that providing CAC cards to all entitled beneficiaries may be cost prohibitive. The CSA Retiree Council eagerly awaits the outcome to the pilot program. Retirees understand the need for the security of AKO, but not all meet the requirements for a Common Access Card (CAC). With the pilot program, VCSA and Retirees will be able to assess the cost versus benefit ratio of providing CACs through surveyed feedback and analysis of the program. Certainly, by replacing usernames and passwords with smartcard authentication, the Army network became more secure. In addition, spouses and Retirees had a more secure and convenient method for accessing Army online resources and sites that contain personally identifiable information. There is a concern that the fairly restrictive parameters of the pilot program cannot carry forward to actual implementation (i.e. reside within commuting distance of an Army installation, only work on a Windows PC, etc.)

If entrance to AKO by retirees and spouses is limited to user name and password going forward, someone will need to insure that retiree access to current information is available and clear directions to access AKO is provided. Effective 30 March 2012 AKO was divided into two different versions: one for "For Official Use Only" (FOUO) content and another for non-FOUO content. As a result, all AKO content

designated by users as FOUO will only be available to those who log in with a CAC/PIN. Users logging in with a username/password will only be able to access non-FOUO content.

Pending resolution of the pilot and VCSA decision, recommend this issue be tabled for this session. However, initiatives that include password protected logon through Department of Defense Self Service Logon (DS logon) DoD and access to non-protected sites such MYARMYBENEFITS www.myarmybenefits.us.army.mil may be suitable solutions.

ISSUE: 03-13-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Clarify the Misinformation and Uncertainty of Retiree Entitlements with Regard to Pay and Benefits.

DISCUSSION: There currently exist multiple sources of information on retiree pay and benefits. Armed Forces service members have long been told by recruiters, the Army, and Congress a myriad of things pertaining to their pay and entitlements when they become eligible to retire. As such, there is vast disparity in what was promised and reality. Service members, retired and active, need a clearly defined information source addressing exactly what their entitlements are or will be (by law) at retirement. This information source would assist current retirees and will enable active service members in planning for retirement much in the same manner as they plan to accomplish any other mission.

RECOMMENDATION: The Army should establish a single source of information clearly defining retirement entitlements by law. Information should address both pay and entitlements broken down by year of retirement and RAS stated retirement plan. Site should be user friendly and easily accessed by retirees and committees or focus groups contemplating fee increases to any program affecting either current or future retired pay and benefits.

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council
SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS:

The CSA Retiree council concurs with the recommendation. However, the Army has already implemented a solution to provide information to retirees through the MyArmyBenefits (MAB) Program. National Defense Authorization Act 2010, Section 561 mandates the Service Secretaries to provide the strategic communications capabilities which are part of the MAB program. This benefits website was mandated to provide Soldiers, Retirees, Veterans, and Families comprehensive benefits information and tools. The MAB website (www.myarmybenefits.us.army.mil) was developed and implemented in FY 2007, has over 150 fact sheets on Federal and State benefits, and several calculators to estimate retirement, deployment, survivorship, and disability benefits and compensation. Providing information to the retiree and annuitant constituency has become difficult with the move to electronic communications coupled with the budget shortfalls prohibiting the production and mailing of print newsletters and bulletins. The new benefits website is a tremendous addition and valuable information tool for retirees and annuitants who have access and are internet savvy. Retirees should be informed that www.myarmybenefits.us.army.mil is the designated single source for benefits and entitlements. This information should be publicized through *Army Echoes* and installation newsletters and homepages across the Army.

ISSUE: 03-14-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Continued Funding for Retiree Informational Programs

DISCUSSION: Increased discussions of budget cuts means there is a need for continued support for informational programs provided to retirees; such as, RSO continuing education training, Army Echoes (hardcopy for retirees who are non-computer users), Retiree Appreciation Days (RAD), installation Retiree Council semi-annual meetings IAW AR 600-8-7, and full access to Army Knowledge Online (AKO) for retirees and family members. These programs are recognized by regulation and it is necessary for commanders to understand their importance and provide them with the appropriate funding. RSOs and Retiree Councils support areas of thousands of square miles, with members living hundreds of miles apart and on fixed incomes. Without continued funding, meetings are not held, no issues are brought forward and the retirees lose an important part of their support and voice.

RECOMMENDATION: CSA Retiree Council support funding for continuing retiree informational programs and retiree council meetings.

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council
SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSA Retiree Council COMMENTS:

The CSA Retiree Council Supports this issue. Recommend that HQ IMCOM provide guidance to installation commanders to ensure informational programs are supported IAW AR 600-8-7 such as installation RSO / transition chief-required DA training, mailing of Retiree newsletters, Retirement Appreciation Day activities and Retiree Councils.

ISSUE: 03-15-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Providing the Installation RSO with Retiree E-mail Addresses

DISCUSSION: The Army G1 RSO is currently collecting retiree e-mail addresses as it transitions to the electronic version of Army E-Echoes as a means to increase the number of retirees reading E-Echoes due to limited funding of hardcopy Echoes.

The same is true for the Fort Stewart RSO and its very limited funds. Currently, Fort Stewart spends \$18,000 on printing and postage for mailing hardcopies of an annual Installation Retiree Newsletter. The cost is prohibitive. The Fort Stewart RSO and Retiree Council continue to seek ways to improve the method it communicates and disseminates information to retirees in the service region. Obviously, the use of computer technology and e-mails will be the fastest and most inexpensive method of communication as more retirees transition online. However, if the installation RSO must collect retiree e-mail addresses and build its own database, the RSO would have to hire an IT Management (Series 2210) or HR Assistant (Series 0203) person or equivalent contractor to build and manage the database. This would be redundant to the G1 RSO activity. Obviously, having the G1 RSO collect the retiree e-mail addresses, as it works to increase reading of E-Echoes, then pass the addresses to the Installation RSO will be a cost savings for the installation. Ultimately, this would be the best way of assisting the retiree community by gathering an e-mail address only once by the G1 RSO; rather than, twice by G1 RSO and then again by the Installation RSO.

RECOMMENDATION: Have the Army G1 RSO continue to serve as the lead element in database management for the collection of retiree e-mail addresses. Have the G1 RSO support the Installation RSOs by providing a monthly download (via spreadsheet) of the collected retiree e-mail addresses (by zip codes).

APPROVED BY RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

COL (Ret) Eileen K. Watson, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council
SGM (Ret) Leopold J. Cimino, Co-Chairperson, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: CSARC supports the concept of sharing email addresses to improve electronic communications between supporting Garrisons and their retiree constituency, particularly given the long term cost savings of print vs. electronic mail. Unfortunately, the data in the current email database does not include the information, such as zip codes, that is required to determine with which installation each retiree who registered for e-Echoes is affiliated. Additionally, current e-Echoes subscribers have not given their permission to share their personal email addresses or information with third parties and the current database does not allow retirees to update their personal information when they move to another state. However, when IT support is available in the future, Army RSO plans to modify its e-Echoes database and will attempt to incorporate the recommendation in the future requirements including the requirement to share personal information with third parties. If there was a conduit to update e-Echoes during e-Echoes registration to include zip codes, then cross reference the information with the Retiree Address Finder (RAF) held by all RSOs, the Retirees' email addresses would be available for the DA and Installation RSOs to use for Retiree info sharing. Another option would be for the Garrison HRO/RSO to request local IT support to link the available data. The best solution would be to have the CSA direct the Army G6 to develop a way to link Retirees with their supporting communities electronically based on existing data and to make the linked zip codes with email addresses available to RSOs. Such an initiative could create long term cost savings and improve communications.

RECOMMENDATION: Issue remains open pending database modification and authorization to share email addresses between agencies. Further deliberations between agencies to resolve this issue is necessary.

ISSUE: 04-16-2012

INSTALLATION COUNCIL: Fort Knox, KY

SUBJECT: Suggestion for Change to AR 600-8-7

DISCUSSION: In Chapter 1, page 3, paragraph 1-4j (6), the Garrison Commander is responsible for establishing a Retiree Council. If the intent is to give the responsibility to the Garrison Commander without involvement by the Senior Commander, that end is accomplished by this regulation. If the intent is to set a "command climate" that sends the message "retired Soldiers are valued," the regulation should be written in such a way that the Senior Commander will actually take an interest.

RECOMMENDATION: Change AR 600-8-7, Retirement services Program

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

COL (Ret) J. Michael Weaver, Chairman, Ft. Knox, KY Retiree Council

CSA RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: AR 600-8-7 paragraph 1-4k states that senior commanders "(including installation commanders, senior mission commanders, and mission commanders, in context of AR 600-20) will support the Retirement Services Program and ensure the retired Soldiers and their Family members and survivors remain an integral part and valued members of the Army Family." Paragraph 1-4l states that Commanders of overseas Army Service Component Commands will "Establish a theater retiree council to voice the concerns of retired Soldiers. The ASCC commander has sole responsibility for funding the theater retiree council; [for] evaluat[ing] the effectiveness of the Retirement Services Program services provided in-theater and participat[ing], through the supporting IMCOM region, in the prioritization of those services; [for] establishing theater-level policy and provid[ing] guidance as appropriate to theater-specific needs of the overseas retiree community; and provid[ing] oversight of the strategic level quality of life and retiree concerns." Recommend the Army RSO evaluate the proposal and bring the responsibilities of senior commanders more in line with those of ASCC Commanders when it next updates Army Regulation 600-8-7.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY RETIREE COUNCIL
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF G-1
300 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

DAPE-HRR

27 April 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

1. The fifty-second meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council was held at the Pentagon, 23-27 April 2012. The Council is established in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-7, "Retirement Services Program," and administered under a charter approved by the Secretary of the Army. The Council represents slightly over one million Retirees and Surviving Spouses.

2. The Council extends its gratitude to the Honorable Dr. Joseph W. Westphal, Under Secretary of the Army, General Lloyd J. Austin III, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III for their strong support of the Retiree Council and their update on issues impacting current and future Retired Soldiers and their Families. Our thanks also to Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick, the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, U.S. Army, who discussed current personnel and resource challenges which provided Council members with timely information on critical Soldier issues and programs and MG Thomas S. Vandal, Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization, Army G3/5/7, for his superb update on current Army operational issues. All of these insights will help the members of the Council accurately disseminate the Army message.

3. **Health Care:** Council members appreciate the ongoing health care initiatives briefed by Ms. Mary Kaye Justis, TRICARE Management Agency. Her thorough overview of key ongoing health care actions will enable Council Members to adequately address many of the concerns expressed by Retired Soldiers and their Families. This is particularly significant as health care continues to be the highest priority issue for Retired Soldiers.

The Council appreciates the ongoing work and initiatives of the Department of Veterans Affairs as briefed by the Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits. Its work in streamlining the disability process and on the Integrated Disability Evaluation System will significantly assist Veterans and Retirees.

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

Actions recommended by the Council:

Recommendation a: If an increase of TRICARE fees must be implemented by the DoD, future fee increases should not under any circumstances be tied to the annual health care inflation rate. Doing so would significantly disadvantage retirees and risk eroding most or all of a retiree's paycheck especially in lowest income category, which is \$22.6K and below. Health care cost of living increases must never exceed the annual percentage increase for retired pay, with special consideration given to not overburdening Soldiers E-7 and below.

Recommendation b: Support legislation to authorize pretax payment of TRICARE enrollment fees and premiums for TRICARE supplemental, long-term care, and TRICARE dental insurance.

Recommendation c: A previous CSA Retiree Council recommendation to eliminate copayments for generic and chronic care drugs obtained through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery (TPHD) as a way to incentivize greater use and reduce DoD health care costs has been executed by the TRICARE Management Agency. Recommend increased marketing efforts to increase TPHD participation to realize additional cost savings. In addition, consider making mandatory the use of TPHD for chronic care drugs. Such a policy change would save many millions of dollars with no loss of service to retirees.

4. **Strategic Communications, Retirement Services, and Education**: Council members appreciate the ongoing efforts of IMCOM in supporting previously raised Retiree Council issues pertaining to standardization of Retirement Services Officer (RSO) positions and periodic RSO training. Recommend sustaining this effort and reviewing impacts at joint base locations to ensure transition has not adversely affected delivery of retirement services and reduced it below Army standards.

The achievements of the past year and the ongoing initiatives to strengthen the Reserve Component retirement program briefed by Lieutenant General William E. Ingram, Director, Army National Guard and Command Sergeant Major Richard Burch, Army National Guard and by Brigadier General James V. Young, Jr., Deputy Chief, Army Reserve and Command Sergeant Major Michael D. Schultz, Army Reserve will provide Reserve Component Soldiers with an informative and positive transition into retirement. The ongoing collaboration in the retirement transition process among the DA Retirement Services Office, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve is invaluable for all Soldiers and their Families as they start their retirement planning. We greatly appreciate the outstanding effort and applaud the results made over the past year.

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

Current and future Retired Soldiers remain the most credible ambassadors of our Army. Continuing to provide up-to-date information regarding Army programs and initiatives to Retirees ensures the Army story is accurately told and disseminated across America.

Recommendation a: Add the value and contributions of Retirees to DA developed Senior Leadership materials and talking points that tell the Army story. We believe doing so will provide better visibility of what Retirees provide to our Army, reinforce and encourage subordinate commanders to engage, support, and involve Retirees within their communities, and educate external audiences that Retirees are not a corporate resource, but an integral part of the institutional fabric.

Recommendation b: Increase Soldiers' and spouses' understanding of their entitlements, benefits, and service transitions throughout their careers. The Council recommends incorporating modules of instruction in resident and nonresident courses such as the Garrison Leaders Course, Commanders and Command Sergeants Major Pre-Command Course (Ft Leavenworth), Warrant Officer Career Course, and the Sergeants Major Course. Recommend Spouses also receive similar instruction through Family Readiness Groups, Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP), and Army Community Services.

Recommendation c: Continue funding the publication of "Army Echoes" three times a year. This is critical for keeping Retirees informed and current on legal and entitlement/benefit issues as well as Army programs, initiatives, and policy changes. In a 2010 Questionnaire of Retired Soldiers, 33 percent indicated that they did not have computer access. Of those Retirees who had computers or access to a computer, more than 50 percent indicated they would not go online to read "Echoes". However, significant progress is also being made this year in migrating retirees to "e-Echoes". To continue this pace of progress the Army should devote additional resources to create and maintain the different electronic media that will maximize electronic delivery of Echoes and minimize costs, in the long run, of hard copy publication.

Recommendation d: Maintain the level of funding for pre- and post-transition services for all installations/garrisons worldwide. The Council identified disparate support for retiree services across the Army. Suggest that CG, IMCOM review the level of Retiree support across IMCOM. Intent is to standardize and prioritize the delivery of Retiree services, funding/support of Retiree Council/Appreciation events, and general outreach and engagement of the Army's Retiree community. Integrating Retirees into senior leader talking points, Garrison Leader Courses, the IMCOM CG's Top 10 priorities and the Army Covenant will help ensure a culture of Retiree support exists at every garrison.

Recommendation e: Transitioning to retirement is a significant event for Soldiers. Recommend that Soldiers have a minimum of twelve to eighteen months to complete mandatory requirements as well as avail themselves of the many transitioning services.

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

An October 2010 transition experience questionnaire indicated that almost 88 percent of Retired Soldiers queried indicated they would advise another Soldier to attend a pre-retirement briefing; 71 percent of active duty respondents reported their retirement experience had a positive impact on their perception of the Army.

Recommendation f: Complete the establishment of Retirement Services Offices at major Army Reserve and Army National Guard commands to ensure all retiring and Retired Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, their Families, and survivors are properly informed about retirement-related benefits and entitlements.

Recommendation g: Retiring Soldiers are authorized the Army Retiring Soldier Commendation Package upon retirement. The package includes a U.S. Flag and an Army Retired pin. Receipt of the flag is required by Title 10 of the US Code Subsection 12605; the pin by AR 600-8-7, "Retirement Services Program". Ensure funding and contracts are sustained so that these items continue to be presented to all retiring Soldiers as they retire.

5. **Benefits:** Council members appreciate the significant amount of work that Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) continues to do in the area of customer service. Mr. Tom McKenna, Deputy Director, Retiree and Annuitant Pay, DFAS-Cleveland, and his team have implemented process improvements which clearly focus on best practices in customer support and efficient customer service.

Recommendation a: Although specific courses of action regarding retiree pay reform have not been developed, we strongly recommend that any initiative that risks attracting and retaining Soldiers be strongly opposed. We only have to look back to the retirement REDUX program of 1986 to find evidence of harm a change to retirement pay can have on the readiness of the force. In addition, any official suggestions or recommended initiatives that cause Army retired pay and benefits to mirror that of corporate professionals should also be strongly opposed.

Recommendation b: Acknowledge spouses' long-term commitment to the Army by issuing them an indefinite ID card at age 65. Significant cost savings would be realized if this proposal was adopted based on approximately 536,000 spouse cards (all DoD) requiring renewal every four years between age 65 and 75. Issuing an indefinite ID card at age 65 would result in a savings efficiency of approximately 10 million dollars.

Recommendation c: Support space available child care services access for up to six months for children of Soldiers being medically retired. Children of temporary and permanent Army medical Retirees, including Wounded Warriors, are not authorized on-post child care services after the Soldiers' effective retirement dates. Most of the privatized property management partners allow the military Family to reside on the installation for up to six months after medical retirement. Extending child care privileges would help medically retiring Soldiers and their Families as they transition.

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

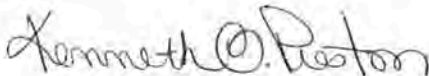
Recommendation d: Recognize the contributions of Surviving Spouses by authorizing Space Available Air Travel. This will send a strong message that their support of the Army will not be forgotten after the death of their Soldiers. As a lower category priority than active duty Soldiers, Surviving Spouses would not burden the stand-by system since they were authorized space available travel with their spouses.

6. Council members recognize the significant resource challenges facing our Army due to a declining budget and the resulting impact on personnel and programs. In this environment Retiree volunteer service will be needed more than ever. As part of the Army team, we will continue to do our part in telling the Army story and in providing support wherever and whenever needed. The ongoing contributions and volunteer service of so many of the one million plus Retired Soldiers and Surviving Spouses is a commitment to our Army, to active duty and retired Soldiers, and to Family Members.

7. Council Members extend their thanks and appreciation for the outstanding support and assistance provided by Mr. John Radke, Department of Army Retirement Services Officer, and his staff during the Council meeting. We also extend our thanks to the distinguished guest speakers listed at Enclosure 1 for the invaluable information and insight they provided.

8. Council members participating in the meeting are listed at Enclosure 2.

9. Unresolved issues are listed at Enclosure 3.



KENNETH O. PRESTON
Sergeant Major of the Army
U.S. Army, Retired
Co-Chairman



FREDERICK E. VOLLRATH
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army, Retired
Co-Chairman

Enclosures

1. Guest Speakers
2. Council Members
3. Unresolved Issues

STILL PROUD - STILL SERVING - STILL SALUTING

GUEST SPEAKERS

Honorable Dr. Joseph W. Westphal, Under Secretary of the Army

Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs

General Lloyd J. Austin III, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army

Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army

Lieutenant General William E. Ingram, Jr., Director, Army National Guard, United States Army

Major General Thomas S. Vandal, Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization

Brigadier General Francis L. Hendricks, CG, AAFES

Brigadier General James V. Young, Jr., Deputy Chief, Army Reserve, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve

Colonel John W. Radke, USA (Retired), Chief, Army Retirement Services, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army

Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, Sergeant Major of the Army, United States Army

Command Sergeant Major Richard Burch, Command Sergeant Major, Army National Guard, United States Army

Command Sergeant Major Michael D. Schultz, Command Sergeant Major, United States Army Reserve

Ms. Stephanie Hoehne, Principal Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Army

Ms. Diane Randon, Director, Installation Services, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Installation Management

Ms. Jeri Busch, Director of Compensation, OASD (R&FM)

Mr Joseph Eule, Special Asst. to Chief, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Army

Ms. Mary Kaye Justis, Asst. Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

GUEST SPEAKERS (cont)

Mr. Thomas McKenna, Deputy Director, Retired and Annuity Pay, Defense Finance and Accounting Service

Mr. Mark Overberg, Deputy Chief, Army Retirement Services, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army

COUNCIL MEMBERS

RANK/NAME	INSTALLATION	IMCOM REGION
LTG Frederick E. Vollrath Co-Chairman	At Large	At Large
SMA Kenneth O. Preston Co-Chairman	At Large	At Large
COL Eileen K. Watson	Fort Stewart	Atlantic
COL Alphonso W. Knight, Jr.	JB Lewis-McChord	Central
COL Michael R. Molosso	Fort Jackson	Atlantic
MAJ Edwin S. Stone III	Fort Bliss	Central
MAJ James R. Cunningham	Fort Sam Houston	Central
CW5 Robert L. Huffman	Fort Campbell	Atlantic
CSM Robert Henault	EUSA	Korea
CSM William E. Hoffer	Carlisle Barracks	Atlantic
CSM Elijah King, Jr.	Fort Hood	Central
CSM Jackie Moore	Fort Huachuca	Central
SGM David B. Stewart	Army in Europe	Europe
SFC Susan J. Woods	JB Lewis-McChord	Central

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

1. Continue to support the ongoing efforts between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the compatibility of the two health care systems to preserve and improve the benefits for all beneficiary groups.
2. Support efforts to provide full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation to all eligible military retirees regardless of disability rating or years of service.
3. Support the DFAS initiative to forgive any overpayment of retired pay for any period after the date of death of a Retiree through the last day of the month in which death occurs.
4. Support a test program under which Retired Soldiers who are supported by APOs in Germany be allowed to send and receive parcels weighing up to 5 pounds, for the purpose of quantifying impacts. The three Service Retiree Councils have repeatedly supported a test program and senior leaders in Europe (USAREUR and USEUCOM) and Korea (USFK) have requested the amendment of Military Postal System (MPS) rules to authorize mail privileges for Box R (military retirees) for parcels up to 5 pounds. However, OSD has disapproved those requests citing assumed increases in cost and workload. This issue remains the top quality of life issue, after health care, for military retirees residing in Europe and the Pacific.