



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


Army Retirement Services

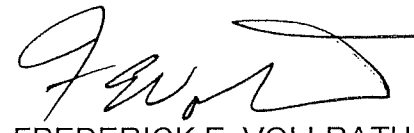
30 April 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council Report

1. The fiftieth meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council was held at the Pentagon during the period 26-30 April 2010.
2. The Council members reviewed and discussed 32 issues submitted by 16 installation Retiree Councils. 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.


JACK TILLEY
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: 01-01-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Ft Myer (Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall)

SUBJECT: Appreciating the Pharmacy Benefit

DISCUSSION: One of the most significant benefits for Retirees is the pharmacy benefit. When prescriptions are filled in a military treatment facility, there are no charges. The Mail Order Pharmacy levels only modest co-payments. However, Retirees are not cognizant of the value of the prescription they receive. They do not understand how much they would have to pay if they did not have the TRICARE benefit. To remedy this situation, the list price of every prescription should be recorded adjacent to the name of the drug issued. This arrangement can be phased in slowly, with priority provided to the most frequently dispensed medications. By alerting Retirees, or for that matter, all personnel serviced by the military treatment facility and Mail Order Pharmacy, more care will be taken to conserve and safeguard the benefit. The projected savings through conservation should off-set the cost of adopting this arrangement.

APPROVED BY THE INSTALLATION CO-CHAIRS:

Frank Cohn, COL (Ret.) and Robert L. Brown SGM (Ret.)

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports including the retail cost of the medication on the prescription education sheet.

Issue: 01-02-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits for Retirees Living in Long Term Care (LTC) Facilities Such as Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

DISCUSSION: Long Term Care facilities control pharmaceuticals like hospitals. They obtain, control and issue medications to patients in accordance with medical practices and a combination of federal and state regulations. Patients are prohibited from providing their own, personally procured medication for their own use at an LTC facility. This is for the safety of the resident and to relieve the LTC facility of liability. In practice, this means TRICARE insured residents cannot use medication obtained from a Military Treatment Facility, from the TRICARE Mail Order Program, nor from a TRICARE Network Retail Pharmacy such as Walgreens or CVS.

Long Term Care facilities contract with a "closed door" LTC pharmacy that meets Medicare guidelines, to provide medication to the LTC facility on a 24/7 basis. The medication is packaged and labeled with the patient's name in a form that allows for easy control by the LTC staff. According to the Long Term Care Pharmacy Alliance website, one out of three LTC pharmacy corporations control eighty percent of the LTC market, serving four out of every five residents of LTC facilities nationwide. These corporations provide electronic insurance billing services and coordination of benefits between Medicare Part D and state Medicaid agencies. None of these corporations are part of the TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Network (they are not retailers).

The TRICARE Non-Network Pharmacy Option appears to have been designed to meet the needs of TRICARE eligible recipients who are in isolated, mainly overseas, locations. There is currently no TRICARE pharmacy program that meets the need of LTC residents, especially the need for electronic billing and coordination of pharmacy benefits between TRICARE/TRICARE for Life and Medicare/Medicaid.

RECOMMENDATION: TRICARE Express Scripts should ship chronic medication directly to the LTC pharmacy for dispensing to patients. If the above is not possible or for immediate need medication, TRICARE should follow the lead of Medicare and the Medicare Part D Insurers, enlist LTC pharmacies into a TRICARE approved network for use by Nursing Homes and other LTC facilities and authorize direct electronic billing and coordination of pharmacy benefits between Network LTC pharmacies, the TRICARE contractor (Express Scripts) and Medicaid as is done by Medicare/Medicaid.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports expanding the TRICARE Pharmacy contract to support TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Network inclusion of Long-Term Care facility pharmacies to meet state laws.

Issue: 01-03-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: Army in Europe

SUBJECT: TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) Acceptance of Preferred Provider Prescriptions

DISCUSSION: The TMOP is the least expensive option, for the Army and for the beneficiary, to obtain prescription drugs when no MTF pharmacy is readily available. Current procedures require prescriptions to be written by a US-licensed provider and the overseas beneficiary to have an APO/FPO address.

Due to the continuous reduction of MTFs overseas, it is a severe hardship for many beneficiaries to travel to an MTF to have an MTF provider write their prescriptions or to have an MTF provider "re-write" a prescription written by a host-nation provider who in all probability is not US-licensed.

Many local doctors, especially where there are high concentrations of Retired Soldiers, have been certified as Preferred Providers by the servicing MTF Commander. The number of Preferred Providers is expected to increase as the TRICARE Overseas Program 08 contract is implemented.

This certification enables the MTF pharmacy to fill prescriptions written by the Preferred Provider. However, it does not enable TMOP to fill the prescriptions, unless the Preferred Provider is US-licensed. Recommend the use of the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy program be facilitated by permitting the program to fill prescriptions written by Preferred Providers whether or not they are US-licensed.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Robert Mentell, Colonel (Ret.), 14 Feb 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council recommends that TRICARE Management Agency establish procedures for overseas MTF Commanders to certify Preferred Providers to write prescriptions to be filled by TMOP.

Issue: 01-04-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Leonard Wood, MO

SUBJECT: Prevention of Cost Increases to the Military Health Care System (TRICARE) and Raising Costs to Beneficiaries

DISCUSSION: The DoD Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care has echoed DOD's stand that military Retirees pay more for their "earned" benefits. TRICARE premiums and medical costs should not be increased to those who have sacrificed so much. Health care benefits should continue to be provided to Retirees at the same level of funding with no increase in cost to Retirees.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Julius Nutter, CSM (Ret.) 2009

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council does not support placing additional financial burdens on the Retired population. However, if an increase is absolutely necessary, the increase should: 1) definitively contribute to the overall improvement of the TRICARE program; 2) be indexed for cost calculations; and 3) not exceed the future annual rate of growth in retired pay with special consideration to not overburden E-7s and below.

Issue: 01-05-2010

IMCOM REGION: CSA Retiree Council

INSTALLATION: Pentagon

SUBJECT: Eyewear for Retirees

DISCUSSION: Provide Retirees with a choice of eyeglass frames similar to Active Duty members rather than only the standard Brown Army frames now offered at medical treatment facilities (MTF).

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council recommends a self-funded voluntary Optical Insurance Plan that provides a menu of varied opportunities for eye wear selection for Retirees and their families (similar to the Retiree Dental Insurance Plans).

Issue: 01-06-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Pacific

INSTALLATION: Schofield Barracks, HI

SUBJECT: Preventing TRICARE Fee Increases for Retirees

DISCUSSION: In 2009, a proposal was made to raise inpatient co-pays for retired TRICARE Standard beneficiaries by \$110 per day. Army Retirees were surprised by the action and shocked at the amount of the increase. Many of the Retirees protested through veterans organizations and the proposal was set aside for now. The issue is dormant at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: The Army Hawaii Retiree Council requests approval for the Department of the Army to be alert for proposals to increase fees and to be prepared to battle increased in the years ahead.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Allen K. Ono, LTG, USA Ret., Date of Appt 16 Jun 2006

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council does not support placing additional financial burdens on the Retired population. However, if an increase is absolutely necessary, the increase should: 1) definitively contribute to the overall improvement of the TRICARE program; 2) be indexed for cost calculations; and 3) not exceed the future annual rate of growth in retired pay with special consideration to not overburden E-7s and below.

Issue: 01-07-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort McCoy, WI

SUBJECT: Preservation of the unique identity and role of the military TRICARE health delivery system in any national care reform plan

DISCUSSION: There are currently a number of major health care reform bills being discussed in Congress. These proposals contain very complex issues, especially when some proposed bills are 1,000 pages or more.

It is essential to recognize the nation's unique responsibilities to those who served in uniform and Defense Department's special employer responsibilities to the families of those who rendered decades of service to our country.

Military health benefits provide an essential offset to the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career. Military Retirees deserve a package of care consistent with their extraordinary service and sacrifice. Military health benefits are critical in sustaining a career, all-volunteer force. Subjecting military members to taxation would be a major erosion of benefits undermining recruiting, retention, and national security. Nor should the Government roll military health care into a broader government-run system.

RECOMMENDATION: Maintain the unique and untaxed military health care program, TRICARE.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Joseph A. Scheinkoenig, MG (Ret), 1 January 2009

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports recent legislation which states that TRICARE meets the minimum requirements as stated in the National Healthcare Reform Plan.

Issue: 01-08-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Campbell

SUBJECT: TRICARE Retiree Dental Program Annual Maximum Benefit Amounts.

DISCUSSION: The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) annual maximum benefit amount is \$1200.00 per person, per benefit year. The maximum benefit amount for orthodontics is \$1500.00 per person, per lifetime. The annual maximum benefit has not been adjusted in a number of years. The lifetime orthodontic benefit was adjusted last year from \$1200.00 to \$1500.00. These benefit amounts do not provide adequate coverage. For example, dental crowns (also called caps) cost \$500-\$3,000 a tooth, depending on materials, complexity, location, and the dentist's training and experience. TRDP covers 50% of the cost of caps, crowns, onlays, and bridges. If a Retiree were required to have two crowns in a benefit year, the amount covered could easily exceed the maximum benefit amount for a benefit year, requiring the Retiree to pay any additional dental costs out-of-pocket.

RECOMMENDATION: Re-negotiate the TRDP contract to allow an increase of benefits per person, per benefit year.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Lindsay Freeman, MG (Ret.), Appointed Chair on 18 November, 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council recommends that during the negotiation of the next TDRP contract 1) a tier plan is offered and/or 2) an increased level of service be provided at an increased cost to the Retiree population.

Issue: 01-09-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Delta Dental Claims Services

DISCUSSION: Retirees/dental providers complain of difficulty regarding submission and acknowledgement of claims by Delta Dental Claims Services. Delta Dental allows claims to be submitted via FAX but then claims that the office never received the FAX. Said process is repeated time after time until the patient must submit claim by mail with Receipt Requested to Delta Dental who then finally acknowledges receipt of claim submission. They then deny submission due to being received in a period exceeding the time limit for claims submission (one year). This is a frequent ongoing problem. This is an unacceptable practice as it shortchanges many military Retirees on their Delta Dental services.

Recommendation: Delta Dental needs to have procedures in place for accountability for all claims sent by FAX or to refuse FAX claims and require providers to submit them by mail or electronically.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports the need for improved communication and accountability between TRICARE Retiree Dental Program, dental providers, and enrollees.

Issue: 02-10-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Forgive any Overpayment of Retiree Pay for the Death Month of Recipient

DISCUSSION: Currently the family of the deceased retiree must apply for the unpaid pay and allowances (SF1174) based on the day of death month. Normally there is a delay of 45 to 90 days before payment is received.

RECOMMENDATION: Support an amendment to USC Title 10 to forgive any overpayment of retired pay for any period after the date of death of the recipient through the last day of the month in which death occurred.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. The Deputy Director, Retired & Annuitant Pay, DFAS, reported to this Council that DFAS has initiated action to waive the recovery of pay made in the month of death. In the interim, the Council recommends that recovery of the amount paid after the date of death be collected from the recipient by written correspondence rather than automatic withdrawal from the financial institutions that received the direct deposit.

Issue 02-11-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: United States Army Garrison Heidelberg

SUBJECT: Expand Capability for Online Changes to Retirement Pay by Retirees

DISCUSSION: The MyPay website permits military Retirees to make many online changes to their retirement pay account. However, in the area of allotments, a retiree may only start a new allotment. There is no provision for stopping or changing an existing allotment online. To change or stop an allotment, the Retiree must send a written request to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, United States Military Retirement Pay, London, KY.

Suggested Change: Permit Retirees to change or stop allotments online.

RECOMMENDATION: That Department of the Army asks DoD to remove the current restriction pertaining to online changes to allotments.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Larry Applebaum, LTC (Ret), January 1990

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. The Deputy Director, R&A Pay, DFAS, reported to this Council that this capability is under development and should be available by 31 December 2010.

Issue: 02-12-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: United States Army Garrison Schweinfurt

SUBJECT: Convert Local Forms Used by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), Cleveland

DISCUSSION: Encourage DFAS to convert all local DFAS forms to DOD forms so they are available through the normal publications system. If a mistake is made on a form, individuals or casualty assistance officers (CAOs) must contact DFAS-Cleveland to request a new form be issued, which causes further delays in processing. If DFAS forms were converted to DOD forms, all forms would be available in one location with easy access for CAOs, Retirement Services Officers, Retirees, and annuitants.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Charles Glover, CW3 (Ret), July 2009

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. The Deputy Director, R&A Pay, DFAS, reported to this Council that over 20 forms have been converted to date and only 12 forms remain for action at this time. The Deputy stated that completion will occur prior to 31 December 2010.

Issue: 02-13-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Pacific

INSTALLATION: USAG-J

SUBJECT: Direct Deposit of Benefits Payments to Foreign Bank Accounts

DISCUSSION: Retirees and Surviving Spouses are unable to have their retirement or annuity payments direct deposited into Japanese banks. The Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) has procedures for direct deposit of payments to Japanese banks, however Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) payments must be sent by mail in the form of a hardcopy check. Additionally, due to the Status of Forces Agreement with Japan, Retirees and their surviving spouses lose their privilege to utilize military banking facilities, either upon retirement or upon the sponsor's death. This also places undue hardship on many of our elderly Retirees and surviving spouses who may not reside in close proximity to a military installation.

Additionally, the International Direct Deposit (IDD) procedure currently in use by the SSA and DVA provides for the conversion to the foreign currency at commercial rates, avoiding excessive transfer and exchange fees, and the deposit of the foreign currency in the foreign bank without any additional charge to the Government or the recipient. DFAS has IDD however Japan is not one of the eligible countries, only the following countries are: Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Greece, Haiti, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Japanese retiree and surviving spouses footprint is much larger than many of the countries which have already had IDD established.

RECOMMENDATION: That DFAS be urged to expedite establishing procedures for direct deposit to Japanese banks for the beneficiaries residing throughout Japan.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Charles D. Hopkins, CSM (Ret.), 20081104

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. The Deputy Director, R&A Pay, DFAS, reported to this Council that DFAS will initiate action with the Department of Treasury to authorize Direct Deposit to Japan.

Issue: 02-14-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: United States Army Garrison Wiesbaden

SUBJECT: Provide More Detailed Information to Annuitants on Initial Payment of Entitlements

DISCUSSION: DA should encourage both DFAS-Cleveland and the Veterans Administration (VA) to prepare more detailed letters to annuitants about initial payment of entitlements, including what entitlements are being paid, what the monthly payments will be, and what taxes are being taken out. Individuals and Retirement Services Officers are, in most cases, unable to determine if all entitlements were paid without going back to DFAS and VA for the details. Social Security Administration letters should be the model that both DFAS and VA use.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Robert Pierce, CW4 (Ret), May 1995

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue and recommends that DFAS initiate improved procedures not later than 31 December 2010.

Issue: 02-15-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Elimination of the VA Disability Offset from Earned Service-Based Compensation (Concurrent Receipt) for all Military Retirees

DISCUSSION: Retired pay is earned compensation for a military career and VA disability compensation is recompense for pain, suffering and lost future earnings power resulting from service connected disabilities. However, a 19th century law requires military retirees to forfeit a dollar of retired pay for each dollar of VA disability compensation. The law, which is not applicable to non-military federal Retirees, has created an unfair inequity for military Retirees.

Since 2003, Congress has taken action to incrementally eliminate this inequity by restoring service-based retired pay for 100% disabled Retirees with a minimum 20 years service, all combat-disabled Retirees without regard to length of service or percentage of combat-related disability and a 10 year phase-in (scheduled completion 2014) of the disability offset for Retirees with 50% or higher rated non-combat-related disabilities with at least 20 years of service or retired under the Temporary Early Retirement Authority of the 1990s. Despite congressional action to eliminate the inequity, only 33% of the total disabled retired population has gained relief with 623,000 military Retirees still required to unfairly fund their disability compensation dollar-for dollar from their retired pay.

RECOMMENDATION: Given that all military Retirees earned their retired pay by service alone, there should be no funding distinction made between Retirees receiving VA disability compensation based upon the cause of the disability (combat vs. non-combat) or percentage awarded since the quality of life and future earning power of all Retirees with service connected disabilities are impacted.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council continues to support this issue. The Council supports action to permit all Retired Soldiers who have VA service-connected disabilities, of a combined percentage of 10% or greater, to receive their disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs and their full retired pay entitlement based on their years of military service. Further, the Council supports action to eliminate the 10-year phase-in and 50% service connected requirement under the current law with respect to Concurrent Receipt Disability Payments (CRDP). Further, any amount of the CRDP that is determined by the respective service department to be Combat-Related should be coded as tax free.

Issue: 02-16-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort McCoy, WI

SUBJECT: Full Concurrent Receipt of Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation Payments

DISCUSSION: Until 2004 when Congress granted 50% and higher to service connected military Retirees, the law specified that retired pay would be offset by the amount of disability compensation awarded by the VA. HB 303 would amend the current law to allow any military Retiree, regardless of VA rating, to draw full retired pay in addition to full VA disability compensation.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage legislation to eliminate all VA disability compensation/military retired pay offset.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Joseph. A. Scheinkoenig, MG (Ret), 1 January 2009

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council continues to support this issue. The Council supports action to permit all Retired Soldiers who have VA service-connected disabilities, rated 10% or greater, to receive their disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs and their full retired pay entitlement based on their years of military service. The Council supports action to eliminate the 10-year phase-in and 50% service connected requirement under the current law with respect to Concurrent Receipt Disability Payments (CRDP). Further any amount of the CRDP that is determined by the respective service department to be Combat-Related should be coded as tax free.

Issue: 02-17-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Leonard Wood, MO

SUBJECT: Full Restoration of Concurrent Receipt for Chapter 61 Disability Retirees with Less than 20 years Service

DISCUSSION: Enfranchise those 200,000 members of the Armed Forces who were retired for medical disability with less than 20 years service under 10 US Code, Chapter 61, to draw both their VA disability compensation and their earned military retirement pay under CRDP. Such enfranchisement of these Retirees to receive both their VA compensation and their earned military pay would be consistent with 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 2008 NDAA. Full retired benefits and disability compensation should be provided to all Retired military personnel regardless of their disability rating and years of service.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Julius B. Nutter, CSM (Ret), 20090219

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council continues to support this issue. The Council supports action to permit all Retired Soldiers who have VA service-connected disabilities, rated 10% or greater, to receive their disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs and their full retired pay entitlement based on their years of military service. The Council supports action to eliminate the 10-year phase-in and 50% service connected requirement under the current law with respect to Concurrent Receipt Disability Payments (CRDP). Further any amount of the CRDP that is determined by the respective service department to be Combat-Related should be coded as tax free.

Issue: 02-18-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Leonard Wood, MO

SUBJECT: Eliminate the SBP/DIC Offset

DISCUSSION: Eliminate the SBP/DIC Offset which impacts some 61,000 widows whose military spouse died of service connected causes. According to the latest available data from the Department of Defense Actuary on the Military Retirement System, these offset survivors receive an average of \$1,145 per month DIC which offsets the average \$892 per month SBP. The unused SBP premiums are returned as a lump sum and the survivor incurs a greater tax burden. The military spouse thought he/she was buying "insurance" for his/her survivors. The retiree was not aware that if he/she died of a service connected disability the surviving spouse would become ineligible for SBP. Recommend that survivors of retired military who invested in the survivor benefit plan receive the same financial entitlement to DIC as other military widows/widowers.

RECOMMENDATION: Eliminate the SBP/DIC Offset

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Julius B. Nutter, CSM (Ret), 20090219

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council continues to support this issue. SBP and VA Indemnity Compensation are two different programs. DIC provides a payment of \$1,154 per month in compensation for a service connected death. SBP is purchased insurance which should supplement the DIC. The net result of this offset, in the case of a Retired SSG (E6), is a reduction of annual benefits from \$28,000 to \$15,000, or \$13,000.

Issue: 02-19-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Lowering of the Guard-Reserve Retirement Age

DISCUSSION: When the reserve retirement system was established in 1948, National Guard and Reserve members were presumed to be subject to extended military service only in the unlikely event of a national mobilization. Accordingly, the reserve retirement system was built to supplement a normal civilian career promotion and retirement program.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U. S. homeland, the shift from a strategic to an operational reserve force has profoundly affected the civilian compensation and retirement of Guard and Reserve members. Due to the resultant increases in operational missions, Guard and Reserve members are devoting a far greater share of their working lives to military service than ever envisioned by the 1948 architects of the reserve retirement system.

The FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) took an important first step by reducing the Guard-Reserve retirement age to draw retired pay by three months for every aggregate 90 days of active duty performed effective January 28, 2008 with the lowest authorized possible retirement age being 50. The new authority however, is not extended to Guard-Reserve active duty service for the period September 11, 2001 to January 28, 2008. Further, it does not include eligibility for TRICARE, which is incongruously deferred to age 60.

RECOMMENDATION: With DoD projection of 12 month Guard-Reserve mobilizations every five or six years, the U. S. Government has a clear obligation to; Help offset the civilian retirement losses of Guard-Reserve members by lowering the reserve retirement age to match the operational reserve service requirements for all Guard-Reserve members as of September 11, 2001; and, Eliminate the current TRICARE eligibility gap by making it available to Guard-Reserve members upon drawing of Guard-Reserve retired pay.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL: The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council supports this issue and requests it be retroactive to those Reserve/Guard Soldiers that have been called up since September 11, 2001. The Council also supports eliminating the current TRICARE eligibility gap created when the start of receipt of retirement pay is prior to 60 years of age.

Issue: 02-20-2010

IMCOM REGION: Army Reserve Components

INSTALLATION: Human Resource Command, St. Louis [TAG West]

SUBJECT: Instate full retirement benefits to RC Soldiers who retire earlier than age 60.

DISCUSSION: NDAA 2008 reduced the Non-Regular retirement age (60) for those Soldiers who were called to active duty on or after 29 January 2008 under authority of 10 USC 12301(d). RC Soldiers may retire under this authority and receive full earned retired pay and benefits EXCEPT TRICARE (medical coverage). Health care coverage for Retirees is a large part of the benefit earned for 20+ years of service. This discrimination is not conducive to the RC Retiree providing a positive recommendation for a civilian to enlist and does not coincide with the "One Army" motto.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Stephen H. Welch, LTC (the RC does not have a Retiree Council at this time)
Chief, Transition and Separations, HRC-S

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue and recommends eliminating the current TRICARE eligibility gap created when the start of receipt of retirement pay is prior to 60 years of age.

Issue: 02-21-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-West

INSTALLATION: Fort Hood, TX

SUBJECT: Reserve Component Retired Pay and Acceptable Offset Budget Rule

DISCUSSION: The National Defense Appropriation Act for 2009 made effective 28 Jan 08 that those National Guard Reserve Members who mobilized after 28 Jan 08 allowed those members to receive reserve retired pay early in accordance with the 90 for 90 rule. This rule allows those mobilized after 28 Jan 08 to receive retired pay 90 days early for every 90 aggregate days they are mobilized. However, it was not retro-active to 11 Sep 01. The NDAA10 did not include this correction to the law because lawmakers said they could not find a way to pay for the benefits under congressional budget rules. In their report accompanying the defense bill, negotiators said they would support the provision provided that acceptable offsets are identified consistent with budgetary requirements of both the Senate and the House of Representatives." Under congressional budget rules, if lawmakers want to increase military retirement benefits, they must either reduce spending on other federal entitlements or make a decision at the start of the budget cycle to set aside more entitlement money for the Defense Department." Recommend that this correction to the NDAA 08 be presented for incorporation in the NDAA11 and not let it be overlooked.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CO-CHAIRPERSON:

Frank Minosky, CSM, USA, Retired

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue and recommends funding be set aside early enough to be included in NDAA 2011.

Issue: 03-22-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Allow Surviving Spouses to Fly on Military Aircraft

DISCUSSION: Department of Defense Directive 4515.13R "Air Transportation Eligibility" allows dependents of military Retirees accompanied by their sponsor to travel aboard DoD owned or controlled aircraft to, from and between overseas areas. Dependents of Retired military personnel are authorized to travel to and from locations within the continental United States with their sponsor as a result of the calendar year 2003-2004 Dependent CONUS test which has been continued.

The surviving spouse and minor children of deceased military Retirees are presently not allowed to utilize the space available air transportation that was available to them when the sponsor was alive. There is excess space available on many DoD aircraft that could be used to provide flights for the surviving spouse and accompanied dependent children to add to the quality of life of the deceased Retiree's family.

RECOMMENDATION: The surviving spouse and minor children are included in General Category VI (Retirees and dependents) for space available travel consistent with the original sponsor accompanied authorized space available travel.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. Adding the Surviving Spouses and their minor children to space available travel privileges would not further constrain resources. As a lower priority than active duty Soldiers, Surviving Spouses and their minor children could only travel when space was existing after meeting the needs of active duty Soldiers.

Issue: 03-23-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-West

INSTALLATION: Presidio of Monterey, CA

SUBJECT: Space Available Travel for Surviving Spouse after the Death of the Sponsor

DISCUSSION: In accordance with DoD Regulation 4515.13-R, Section C6, Sub-Section c6.1.10, except in special circumstances, spouses are allowed to travel on Space Available (Space-A) only when accompanied by their military sponsor. The California/Nevada Retiree Council proposes that spouses of deceased military Retirees, upon presentation of proof of death of their sponsor and in possession of a valid military dependent identification card be allowed to continue to be authorized Space-A Travel. By definition "Space-A" means a Retiree is allowed to travel only if there is space available on the aircraft and there are seats available in Category VI. If these criteria are not met, then one doesn't go. There is no financial or mission impact by allowing Space Available Travel for Surviving Spouses.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Barton Gilbert, BG (Ret), 1 Jan 08

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council continues to support this issue. Adding the Surviving Spouses to space available would not further constrain resources. As a lower priority than active duty Soldiers, Surviving Spouses could only travel when space was existing after meeting the needs of active duty Soldiers.

Issue: 03-24-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Campbell

SUBJECT: Transfer of Chapter 33, Post 9/11 GI Bill Benefits to Family Members

DISCUSSION: The ability to transfer Chapter 33 benefits to family members is restricted to those Soldiers that were on active duty on 1 August 2009, the effective date of the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Only spouses and children currently enrolled in DEERS are eligible for this transfer. The transfer of benefits is said to be designed to help improve military recruiting retention. The Chief of Staff, Army, has said that Retirees should be used to strategically communicate with the public as a recruiting tool. Army Retirees who devoted much of their lives serving this great nation tell the Army story very well, indeed. The spouse and children allowed to use the Retiree's GI Bill education benefits to attend college would add an altogether different, and much needed, perspective to this story.

Keeping Retired Soldiers that served since 9/11 but retired prior to the 1 August 2009 implementation date from using this benefit is not only a disservice to the Retiree and their family, it also reduces the opportunity to communicate strategically. These Soldiers faithfully paid into the GI Bill. In doing so, there was no way of knowing that an option such as a transfer would ever come along.

In addition, if approved, the ability to transfer benefits to children should not be limited to those that are currently enrolled in DEERS. Many children have since been dis-enrolled from DEERS due to their age. Current law allows dependent children (enrolled in DEERS) to whom these benefits have been transferred, to receive GI Bill education benefits until age 26.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow transfer of Chapter 33, Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to family members of every Retiree that qualifies for benefits through their service since 10 September 2001. Allow transfer of benefits to any child up to age 26 if the child was ever enrolled in DEERS but lost eligibility due to age.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Lindsay Freeman, MG (Ret.), Appointed Chair on 18 November, 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council does not support this issue. The statute is a recruiting and retention tool and cannot be transferred. The sunset rule was a temporary provision for the 20 year retirement eligible on the enactment date.

Issue: 03-25-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income Payments for Wounded Warriors

DISCUSSION: Service members that have been seriously wounded may be eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits in addition to DoD and VA disability benefits. GAO reports that prior to the creation of the Wounded Warrior Program in 2007, wounded warriors were not informed about Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits and have encountered barriers when applying. Further, GAO reports that eligible wounded warriors since the creation of the Wounded Warrior Program are experiencing delays in receiving Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits due to DoD's untimely transfer of their service medical records to the Social Security Administration.

RECOMMENDATION: Even though DoD, VA and the Social Security Administration have been making a concerted effort to contact eligible wounded warriors and the Social Security Administration has been expediting their claims, service delivery problems remain. DoD should provide service medical records to Social Security Administration in a more urgent manner in order to expedite wounded warrior disability claims. DoD, VA and Social Security Administration should disseminate the eligibility criteria and procedures for receipt of compensation for service-connected disabilities to those Retirees separated prior to the creation of the Wounded Warrior Program in 2007. For example, the Army could use Army Echoes to disseminate this information.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue and recommends information dissemination through Echoes and installation RSOs who can announce the information during their RADs and publish it in their community-supported Retiree newsletters. However, it is important to note that it is ultimately the Retiree's responsibility to determine if he or she is eligible.

Issue: 03-26-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA) Reform

DISCUSSION: The current law requiring the division of military retired pay with former spouses unfairly contains significant inequities that merit correction. It provides benefits to former spouses based on service completed and promotions earned years after the divorce. Further, Judges have inappropriately ruled that military Retirees must divide VA disability compensation with a former spouse or must begin payments to the former spouse upon attaining 20 years of service – effectively forcing the service member from active duty. Other provisions force Retirees to pay the former spouse's share and bars SBP coverage of a new spouse, even if a former spouse agrees that the coverage should be switched to the new spouse.

In the 1990's, legislation was introduced to address these inequities. Instead of acting on the legislation, Congress directed DoD to study the former spouse law and make any recommendations for change. The report submitted by DoD in 2001 did not support major reform.

RECOMMENDATION: In view of the significant inequities of the current law, DoD's support for the following congressional fix is imperative to establishing balance and fairness:

- Terminate military retired pay payments upon the former spouse's remarriage.
- Base award of retired pay on the member's grade and years of service at time of divorce, not the time of retirement.
- Strengthen the prohibitions against awarding VA disability pay to a former spouse.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports addressing the inequities currently included in the USFSPA. However, DoD has submitted proposed changes several times since 2002. In 2008 and 2009, changes cleared OMB and were included in the FY08 and FY09 Omnibus Bills, but Congress failed to act. The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council recommends resubmission of this issue to Congress.

Issue: 03-27-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Southeast

INSTALLATION: Fort Stewart, GA

SUBJECT: Continued Funding for Retiree Informational Programs

DISCUSSION: Continued support for informational services provided through "Army Echoes", Retiree Appreciation Days, training for RSO's, and full access to Army Knowledge Online (AKO) for Retirees, their spouses, and family members.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):

Eileen K. Watson, COL (Ret), 23 Oct 04

Ray A. Quinn, SGM (Ret), 14 Oct 06

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. Continued funding of Army Echoes, proper staffing and training of installation RSOs, support of Retiree Appreciation Days, and authorized access to AKO are essential to providing the information to Retirees, their dependents, and annuitants.

Issue: 03-28-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-West

INSTALLATION: Presidio of Monterey, CA (West Coast)

SUBJECT: Retired Service Office (RSO) Staffing

DISCUSSION: The Army Retirement Services Program regulation, AR 600-8-7, 1-13.a, states that Garrison Commanders are to "Appoint, as a minimum, a full-time and an assistant RSO to implement the retirement services program outlined..." in the regulation. Furthermore (1-13.d), states that the Garrison Commander is to "...ensure that retirement services functions are allocated adequate resources to accomplish their missions as developed by the DCS, G-1."

The duties and responsibilities of the Retirement Services Program are vast and endless. The ever expanding mission of the US Armed Forces has increased the numbers of military and civilian population being serviced by the RSO and staff, and forebodes the continuation of that growth. Appropriate staffing and support of the Retirement Services Program is an immediate and ongoing need.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that Garrison Commanders have the resources necessary to comply with AR 600-8-7, paragraph 1-13 and document the authorizations on current and future manpower models within Installation Management Command's manning documents.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Barton Gilbert, BG (Ret), 1 Jan 08

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. Post-Retirement servicing population must be taken into consideration for authorized personnel manning. With approximately one million Army Retirees plus other Military Services Retirees, installation RSOs/volunteers are committing resources (people, time, equipment, and supplies) that are not being provided to professionally support one of our nation's cherished group of citizens and their Families who sacrificed much to our Country – our Military Retirees. RSOs are required to submit, on a monthly basis, the total number of Retirees who utilize post-retirement services (walk-ins, phone calls, web site hits, etc.). For example, Carlisle Barracks (500 active duty personnel assigned) has the only full-time RSO in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; however, the RSO is also responsible for a Total Post-retirement population of over 74,500. We must remember that all military facilities are also responsible for more than the Active Army Military located on post.

Issue: 03-29-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Northeast

INSTALLATION: Fort McCoy, WI

SUBJECT: Retired Service Office (RSO) Staffing

DISCUSSION: The Army Retirement Services Program regulation, AR 600-8-7, 1-13.a, states that Garrison Commanders are to "appoint, as a minimum, a full-time and an assistant RSO to implement the retirement services program outlined" in the regulation. Furthermore (1-13.d), states that the Garrison Commander is to "ensure that retirement services functions are allocated adequate resources to accomplish their missions as developed by the DCS, G-1."

The duties and responsibilities of the Retirement Services Program are vast and endless. The ever expanding mission of the US Armed Forces has increased the numbers of military and civilian population being serviced by the RSO and staff, and forebodes the continuation of that growth. Appropriate staffing and support of the Retirement Services Program is an immediate and ongoing need.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that Garrison Commanders have the resources necessary to comply with AR 600-8-7, 1-13.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Joseph A. Scheinkoenig, MG (Ret), 1 January 2009

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council supports this issue. Post-Retirement servicing population must be taken into consideration for authorized personnel manning. With approximately one million Army Retirees plus other Military Services Retirees, installation RSOs/volunteers are committing resources (people, time, equipment, and supplies) that are not being provided to professionally support one of our nation's cherished group of citizens and their Families who sacrificed much to our Country – our Military Retirees. RSOs are required to submit, on a monthly basis, the total number of Retirees who utilize post-retirement services (walk-ins, phone calls, web site hits, etc.). For example, Carlisle Barracks (500 active duty personnel assigned) has the only full-time RSO in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; however, the RSO is also responsible for a Total Post-retirement population of over 74,500. We must remember that all military facilities are also responsible for more than the Active Army Military located on post.

Issue: 03-30-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Korea

SUBJECT: Retiree Postal Mailing Restrictions

DISCUSSION: Retirees overseas are only authorized to mail 16 oz. letters/packages while contractors and Department of the Army Civilians overseas have no limitations placed on them.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

M. Wade, Retirement Services Officer, Korea Areas I and II, DSN 315-730-4133

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION GARRISON COMMANDER:

COL Larry Jackson, USAG-Red Cloud Garrison Commander, DSN 315-732-7845

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council continues to support this and any initiative that allows Retirees a better quality of life. The three Service Retiree Councils have repeatedly supported changing the mailing limitations placed on overseas Retirees. Senior leaders in Europe (USAREUR & 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 five pounds. However, OSD has disapproved those requests citing assumed increases in cost and work load. This issue remains the top Quality of Life issue, after health care, for the military Retirees residing in Europe and Korea.

Issue: 03-31-2010

IMCOM REGION: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: Army In Europe

SUBJECT: Postal Support to Military Retirees and their Survivors by the Department of State

DISCUSSION: In October 2009, the Department of Defense instructed Department of State to terminate postal support to military Retirees and contractors by its embassies and consulates worldwide effective 31 December 2009 due to an unresolved funding issue. Specifically, the DoD could not reimburse DoS for the support it provided because there was no statutory basis and, hence, payment would violate the Anti-Deficiency Act.

In the same month, the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) sought a solution to this dilemma which would result in the restoration of the support in FY 2011. It involved the DoD pursuing legislation authorizing the restoration of mail support to Retired Service Members provided the Services were willing to pay for the DoS support.

Reports have indicated that Army and the other services have concurred with paying for their Retirees to receive mail support at embassies and consulates.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Chief of Staff, Army, continue to support the resolution of this issue and, as the executive agent for postal support for the Department of Defense, encourage the other services to support it in order for military Retirees to again receive mail support that they have received since World War II.

APPROVED BY THE ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Robert Mentell, Colonel (Retired). 14 February 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council supports this issue and any initiative that allows Retirees a better quality of life. Based on the size of the affected Retiree population in Europe, this program warrants reinstatement.

Issue: 03-32-2010

IMCOM Region: IMCOM-Europe

INSTALLATION: Army in Europe

SUBJECT: Pilot Program for Increased APO/FPO Weight Limit

DISCUSSION: The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council has repeatedly supported the amendment of military postal system rules to authorize mail privileges for Box R patrons (Retirees) for parcels up to five pounds, unless further restricted by host governments. This issue remains the top Quality of Life issue for the approximately 4,640 Retirees residing in the USEUCOM AOR using Retiree Post Office boxes (Box-R). 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.

Three four-star letters have requested OSD change their policy to eliminate the current 16-ounce limit (in the first case) or increase the limit to 5-pounds (in the latter two cases).

The approval authority disapproved the first two requests and did not respond to the third. The second disapproval stated "The Services' consensus is that an additional weight authorization will increase mail transportation costs, increase workloads at some APOS, and in some cases create additional manpower authorization requirements."

In order to quantify these factors, the European Tri-Component Retiree Council at its 10 December 2008 meeting recommended that a pilot program be initiated under which Retired Soldiers of all services who are supported by APOs in Germany be allowed to receive and send parcels weighing up to 5 pounds. Implementation of the test program would involve simply notifying postal personnel of the US Army in Europe and the US Air Forces in Europe, for they are the enforcers of any limit.

Increased transportation costs, estimated as "minimal", can be determined precisely as the current system which accumulates the total Second Destination Transportation costs collects that data by APO. Increased workloads, estimated as "a minor increase", can be gathered by APO personnel.

The SOFA Supplemental Agreement in Germany authorizes the establishment of a MPS. While Retirees are not included in the pool of eligible persons, a clearance process that addresses the importation of goods by retirees has been in place since 1963.

Recommend the Chief of Staff, Army, support a test program under which Retired Soldiers of all services who are supported by APOs in Germany be allowed to receive and send parcels weighing up to 5 pounds.

APPROVED BY INSTALLATION RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:

Robert Mentell, Colonel (Retired), 14 February 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, RETIREE COUNCIL COMMENTS: Without a test program to ascertain the actual costs, it is impossible to weigh the issue adequately. The Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council recommends supporting a test program under which Retired Military Personnel of all Services who are supported by APOs in Germany are allowed to receive and send parcels weighing up to 5 pounds.



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

Army Retirement Services

30 April 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY

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

1. The fiftieth meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council was held at the Pentagon, 26-30 April 2010.
2. The Council extends its gratitude to General George W. Casey, Jr., General Peter W. Chiarelli, and to Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston for their strong support of the Retiree Council and for their emphasis on issues impacting current and future Retired Soldiers and their Families while the Army and our Nation are at war. General Chiarelli's overview of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program and Lieutenant General Bostick's insights on current social challenges provided Council members with timely information on critical issues and programs. These insights will arm the members of the Council to disseminate the Army message and to assist in meeting Army goals.
3. **Health Care:** Council members appreciate the ongoing health care initiatives briefed by Lieutenant General E. B. Schoomaker and by Rear Admiral C.S. Hunter. The increased focus on preventive health, case management, quality outcomes and consistent communication will serve to enhance health care for all Retirees and their families. This is particularly significant as health care continues to be the highest priority issue for both current and future Retirees. Attempts to reduce the level of benefits of the Military Health Care System raise concerns that the earned entitlement will be eroded based strictly on budgetary constraints.

Actions recommended by the Council:

Recommendation a: Sustain the viability of the military health care program by fully resourcing the Department of Defense health programs.

Recommendation b: If an increase of TRICARE fees must be implemented by the DoD, increases should not exceed the annual future rate of growth in retired pay, with special consideration given to not overburdening noncommissioned officers, E-7 and below.

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

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

Recommendation d: Provide Retirees with a choice of eye glass frames through a self-funded voluntary Optical Insurance Plan similar to the Retiree Dental Insurance Program. Retirees have long advocated a low cost option that allows them more choices than the standard brown Army frames currently available at Medical Treatment facilities

Recommendation e: Encourage the use of The Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) by eliminating copayments for generic and chronic care drugs for TMOP.

Recommendation f : 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.

4. **Strategic Communications, Retirement Services, and Education**: Council members appreciate the ongoing efforts of the IMCOM Commander, Lieutenant General Lynch and Brigadier General Aycock, IMCOM Deputy Commander in supporting previously raised Retiree Council issues pertaining to standardization of Retirement Services Officer (RSO) positions and for their strong support of RSO periodic training and Notary Public certification.

In addition, the ongoing Retiree initiatives briefed by Lieutenant General Stultz, Chief, Army Reserve and by Brigadier General Kadavy, Deputy Director, Army National Guard will provide Reserve Component Soldiers with an informative and positive transition into retirement. The Army National Guard presentation highlighted significant accomplishments in all aspects of retirement processing and counseling.

Current and future Retired Soldiers remain the most credible ambassadors of our Army. Continuing to provide information regarding Army programs and initiatives ensures that the Army story is accurately told.

Recommendation a: Increase the understanding of Soldiers and their spouses on their entitlements and benefits throughout their careers. Modules should be included in both resident and nonresident courses of instruction for mid-grade and senior grade officers and noncommissioned officers, e.g., ANCOC, SMP, ILE, and SSC, and for those courses preparing individuals for command, e.g., First Sergeant's Course and Pre-Command Courses for both garrison and unit commanders. Spouses should also receive similar instruction in Family Readiness Groups, Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) and through Army Community Services.

Recommendation b: Continue to provide funding for three hardcopy issues per year of "Army Echoes." Although efforts continue to maximize the use of the electronic version, known as "E-Echoes," recipients should be encouraged, but not forced, to forego receiving a hardcopy version.

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

Recommendation c: Enhance retirement services available to retiring and Retired Soldiers by raising the level of funding for Pre-Transition Services and Post-Transition Services for all installations/garrisons worldwide. Insure that fiscal requirements are part of the annual POM process and that funding for Retirement Services personnel and programs are fenced, including Retiree Appreciation Days.

Recommendation d: IMCOM complete the establishment of RSO positions IAW the already approved IMCOM Standard Garrison Organization and Common Levels of Support and fill those positions at the target grade by the end of FY 10 or the completion of the established contracted service support.

Recommendation e: 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 on retirement-related benefits and entitlements.

Recommendation f: 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 five 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 five 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 the military retirees residing in Europe and Korea.

Recommendation g. 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.

5. **Benefits:** Council members appreciate the significant amount of work that Defense Finance and Accounting Service has undergone during the conversion from contractor to in-house workforce. Mr. Jeffrey Johnson and his team have implemented process improvements which have clearly focused on best practices as pertains to customer support and efficient customer service.

Recommendation a: Take care of our Surviving Spouses by supporting efforts to eliminate the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset to the Survivor Benefit Plan annuity.

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

Recommendation b: Recognize the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers by including mobilization periods in support of contingency operations beginning on or after 11 September 2001 when determining eligibility date for retired pay (instead of the current effective date of 28 January 2008) and by providing medical benefits concurrently with the start of retired pay.

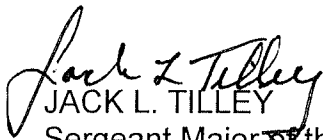
Recommendation c: Support efforts to provide full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation to all eligible military retirees regardless of disability rating or years of service.

Recommendation d: 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.

Recommendation e: Acknowledge their long-term commitment to the Army by issuing eligible surviving spouses an indefinite ID card at age 65.

6. 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. We extend a special note of thanks to three of our Council Members who are completing their term of service—Colonel Alan B. Phillips, Command Sergeant Major G. Frank Minosky, and Sergeant Major Clifford M. Lovett II.

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



JACK L. TILLEY
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

STILL PROUD - STILL SERVING - STILL SALUTING

GUEST SPEAKERS

GEN Peter W. Chiarelli, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army

SMA Kenneth Preston, Sergeant Major of the Army, United States Army

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

LTG Eric B. Schoomaker, The Surgeon General, Office of the Surgeon General

LTG Jack C. Stultz, Chief, Army Reserve, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve

Mr. Sam Retherford, Principal Director of Military Personnel Policy, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

Mr. Michael Cardarelli, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs

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

MG James C. McConville, Chief, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Army

MG James L. Huggins, Jr., Director for Operations, Readiness and Mobilization, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, United States Army

Rear Admiral Christine S. Hunter, Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

BG Allison T. Aycock, Deputy Commanding General, US Army Installation Management Command

BG Jeffrey C. Horne, Director, Human Resources Policy Directorate, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army

BG Timothy Kadavy, Deputy Director, Army National Guard, United States Army

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

GUEST SPEAKERS

COL Robert Norton, USA (Retired), Deputy Director for Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America

LTC William Loper, USA (Retired), Director, Government Affairs, Association of the United States Army, representing the Military Coalition

Mr. Timothy C. Cox, Chief Operating Officer, Armed Forces Retirement Home

Mr. Jeffrey Z. Johnson, Deputy Director, Retired and Annuity Pay, Defense Finance and Accounting Service

COUNCIL MEMBERS

RANK/NAME	INSTALLATION	IMCOM REGION
LTG Frederick E. Vollrath Co-Chairman	At Large	At Large
SMA Jack L. Tilley Co-Chairman	At Large	At Large
BG Barton J. Gilbert	Fort McCoy	Northwest
COL Arlene F. Greenfield	Fort Myer	Northeast
COL Alphonso W. Knight, Jr.	Fort Lewis	Northwest
COL Alan B. Phillips	Army in Europe	Europe
COL Eileen K. Watson	Fort Stewart	Southeast
CW4 Robert N. Cooper	Fort Rucker	Southeast
CSM Robert Henault	EUSA	Korea
CSM William E. Hoffer	Carlisle Barracks	Northeast
CSM G. Frank Minosky	Fort Hood	Southwest
CSM Jackie Moore	Fort Huachuca	Southwest
SGM Clifford M. Lovett II	Fort Leavenworth	Northwest
SGM Albert G. Williams	Fort Lee	Northeast