



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE AND SEVENTH ARMY
UNIT 29351
APO AE 09014-9351

AEAGA-AERC

21 July 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Minutes of the European Tri-Component Retiree Council Meeting

1. The European Tri-Component Retiree Council (ETRC) convened at 1420 hours on 23 June 2011 via video-teleconference.

2. The following persons were present:

a. Members:

Mr. Larry D. Gottardi	Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, USAREUR
COL (USA, Ret) Robert Mentell	President, Army in Europe Retiree Council and 2011 Chair, European Tri-Component Retiree Council
LtCol (USAF) Frank Battistelli	Chief, Readiness Division, Manpower, Personnel and Administration Directorate, J1, USEUCOM
Mr. Anthony Evangelista	Chief, Policy and Program Branch, Manpower, Personnel and Administration Directorate, J1, USEUCOM
LtCol (USAF) Andrea Miller	Directorate of Manpower, Personnel, and Services, A1K, USAFE
CMSgt (USAF, Ret) Michelle Lippert	Retiree Representative, USAFE, and USAFE Member, US Air Force Retiree Council

b. Visitors:

Dr. (Col, USAF) Steven Princiotta	Medical Director, TRICARE Area Office Eurasia-Africa (via teleconference)
SGM (USA, Ret) David B. Stewart	Army in Europe Member, Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council
Mr. William Kaiser	Chief, Support Services Branch, Readiness Division, Manpower, Personnel and Administration Directorate, J1, USEUCOM
Mr. Tom Petty	Postal Policy Specialist, Theater Army Postal Operations Directorate, DCofS, G-1, USAREUR

Note: Cmdr (USN) Christopher Harris and LtCol (USMC, Ret) Larry Waggoner, council members from USNAVEUR, and COL Ralph Lunt, Deputy Director, DFAS Retiree and Annuity Pay, were scheduled to join the meeting but could not because of VTC connection difficulties.

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3. Opening Remarks. COL Mentell opened the meeting and asked all participants to introduce themselves which they did.

4. Welcome and Guidance.

a. Mr. Gottardi as senior member of the host component welcomed everybody to the meeting.

b. LtCol Battistelli, standing in for COL Michael Godfrey, Director of Manpower, Personnel and Administration (ECJ1), EUCOM, expressed support for the efforts of the council.

5. Council Administration (COL Mentell).

a. Review of the Agenda: The council approved the agenda as presented.

b. Approval of the Minutes: The council approved the minutes of the 25 August 2010 and of the 9 December 2010 meeting as presented.

c. Procedures and Documentation: COL Mentell stated that he would prepare minutes of the meeting and share them for review with the members of the council prior to signature.

6. Demographics of Retired Service Members and Annuitants in Theater (COL Mentell). COL Mentell presented demographic data obtained from Defense Manpower Data Center on Retired Service Members and Annuitants with DFAS corresponding address in countries in the USEUCOM area of responsibility as of the end of FY 10. (Annuitants are surviving spouses of retired Service Members receiving monies from DFAS.)

a. Overview: There were 14,362 Retired Service Members in 40 of the 51 countries in the USEUCOM area of responsibility. In addition, there were 2,323 Annuitants in 30 of the 51 USEUCOM countries. Approximately 30% of the retired Service Members and approximately 81% of the annuitants were 65 years of age or older. While the number of Retired Service Members has increased minimally (1.2%) since the end of FY 09, the number of Annuitants has remained virtually unchanged, as has the percentages of Retired Service Members and Annuitants 65 years of age or older.

b. Populations: Of the 14,362 Retired Service Members, 6,868 (48%) were Retired Soldiers, 1,788 (12%) Retired Sailors and Marines, and 5,706 (40%) were Retired Airmen. Of the 2,363 Annuitants, 1,357 (58%) were surviving spouses of Retired Soldiers, 202 (9%) were surviving spouses of Retired Sailors or Marines, and 764 (33%) were surviving spouses of Retired Airmen. All of these percentages are virtually unchanged from those for the end of Fiscal Year 2009.

c. Trends: The trend for Retired Service Members residing in USEUCOM area of responsibility over the period from the end of FY 00 thru FY 10 remained essentially "flat", ranging between 13,594 (FY02) and 14,528 (FY05). The trend for annuitants over the period

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FY00 thru FY10 in showed a continuing increase from 1,804 (FY00) to a current population of 2,323 (FY10).

7. Backbriefs of Service-Level Retiree Council Meetings.

a. Chief of Staff, Air Force, Retiree Council (CMSgt Lippert): Chief Lippert presented the fact sheets on the nine issues considered by the 2011 meeting of the CSAF Retiree Council.

- (1) Pharmacy Recognition of ID Cards
- (2) Increased TRICARE Fees
- (3) Equitable Medicare Reimbursement Schedule
- (4) Current Method of Contact with Defense Finance and Accounting Service
- (5) Recoupment of Arrears of Retired Pay from Survivors of Deceased Members
- (6) Return the Casualty Assistance Representative position to Customer Service
- (7) Retiree Day Health Fairs
- (8) Open all Air Force Dining Facilities for use by Retirees
- (9) DODEA Tuition Category Reclassification

b. Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council (LtCol Waggoner): Prior to the meeting LtCol Waggoner provided the six issues considered by the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council

- (1) Mailing of "Shift Colors"
- (2) Increase to four the number of funded Retiree Program Coordinator position
- (3) Reversal of Recoupment of Retired Pay
- (4) Inconsistent Performance of Medical Personnel on Medical Boards
- (5) Automatic Enrollment of Qualifying Veterans in the VA Healthcare
- (6) Private Providers are Refusing to see TRICARE and Medicare beneficiaries

Subsequent to the meeting LtCol Waggoner provided the following:

(1) He expresses, also on behalf of Cmdr Harris, his regrets in not being able to link up with the council meeting. He added that in these days where the constant refrain is "it won't even be considered in this financial environment, it is pleasant, motivating and necessary to sit at the table, "albeit via VTC" with professionals dedicated to making progress in retiree affairs.

(2) He said he was encouraged that the Increase the MPS Weight Limit has once again received traction. It has consistently been and remains the number one issue in the retiree community in the NAVEUR AOR. He is concerned that linking the Restore the Postal Support by Department of State issue with the weight increase issue. Pushing the weight-increase car forward has been a long and hard effort. Progress has been slight. The concept for a test program was a leap forward. Attaching a trailer loaded with the DoS support issue to our car will require more energy to move forward. With that, he said "move over and let me push, too."

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c. Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council (SGM Stewart): SGM Stewart provided highlights of the 13 issues submitted from the field:

- (1) TRICARE Cost Increases
- (2) TRICARE Prime Fees
- (3) Ban on Employers providing financial incentives to employees to use TRICARE as primary health insurance coverage
- (4) TRICARE Provider Recruitment
- (5) Medicare Reimbursement Rate
- (6) Affording Military Children Equal treatment under the Affordable Health Care for America Act
- (7) Allow Medical Retirees to Use the on-post Child Care Services for 6 months after retirement
- (8) Transferability of Post 9/11 Education Assistance Funds to Dependents
- (9) Concurrent Receipt
- (10) Reduction in Retiree Health Care Benefits
- (11) Updating on Status of Previous CSARC Issues
- (12) Complete the Establishment of Retirement Services Offices at Major Army National Guard and Army Reserve Commands
- (13) Reserve Retiree TRICARE

Because the results of the 2011 CSARC had not yet been briefed to the Chief of Staff, Army, the results of its meeting could not be released.

8. Updates on ETRC Priorities:

a. Priority 1: TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery Program [PHDP Prescriptions by Preferred Providers and PHDP for Retired Beneficiaries in Germany] - (Dr. Princiotta).

(1) After having reviewed the 714 medications ordered in FY 10 by retired beneficiaries in Germany through the PHDP (formerly TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy Program - TMOP), Dr. Princiotta was able to identify 413 (58%) that were on the formulary of the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

(2) Of the remaining 301 medications, many were on the formulary but in difference strengths. He identified three possibilities that would reduce that number:

(a) Taking multiple tablets when the strength is less than prescribed (e.g., taking two 2-mg tablets when one 4-mg tablet is prescribed),

(b) Breaking tablets when strength is more than prescribed (e.g., taking ½ of an 8-mg scorable tablet when one 4-mg tablet is prescribed), and

(c) Identifying substitute medications.

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(2) COL Mentell added that, in FY 10, 278 retired beneficiaries in Germany had submitted 1,688 prescriptions through PHDP.

(3) As TRICARE Area Office Eurasia-Africa continues to ascertain the number of prescription that could be filled through the formularies of the US Army Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) facilities and correlated the medications orders with the number of retired beneficiaries, TAOE should be able to identify the beneficiaries who have medication requirements that need to be handled separately.

(4) The bottom line is that a potential termination of the PHDP program for retired beneficiaries in Germany could impact far fewer individuals that originally anticipated. TAOE will be asked to present an update at the next meeting of the ETRC.

(5) In closing, Dr. Princiotta encouraged Host Nation physicians to register in CHCS, the Composite Health Care System, at the local military treatment facility.

b. Priority 2: DFAS Support for Retirees and Annuitants Overseas [DFAS Toll-Free Telephone Number from Overseas] - (COL Lunt). Subsequent to the meeting, COL Lunt provided the following:

(1) The toll-free telephone number that beneficiaries Germany can use to call Retired and Annuity Pay will be kept in place "for the time being." The number (0800) 5891634 can be dialed from any commercial telephone in Germany.

(2) The MyPay website (mypay.dfas.mil) should be the first option for beneficiaries to make transactions and updates. The log-in procedures has been simplified.

(3) Beginning this fall, a monthly RAS (Retiree Account Statement) will be available on-line so beneficiaries can verify pay amounts, allotments, Appears of Pay Beneficiary information, tax withholding, SBP coverage and more.

c. Military Postal Support for Retirees Overseas [Increase MPS Weight Limit from 16-Ounces to 5-Pounds; Approve a One-Year test Program; and Restore Postal Support by Department of State].

(1) Mr. Kaiser reported that there had been no change in the position of J1, USEUCOM, or of the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) on any of the three components of this issue:

(a) Increase of the weight limit on the use of the Military Postal System overseas by retired service members from 16 ounces to 5 pounds,

(b) Approval of a one-year test program in Germany to allow retired service members who are supported by APOs in Germany to send and receive parcels weighing up to 5 pounds for the purpose of quantifying the potential impacts of the increase,

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(c) Restoration of the postal support previously provided to retired service members by the Department of State through their embassies and consulates.

(2) Mr. Gottardi said he intended to brief the USAREUR leadership on this issue and believed they would support the one-year test program to gather data on the potential impacts of the increase. He felt many of the current estimates appear to be overstated. He asked for a collective effort to do something we need to do for our retirees who are frustrated at the attempts to right-side this issue.

(3) CMSgt Lippert agreed to review the matter with the Col Sharpe, the new USAFE A1 to see if he will support, as did his predecessor.

(4) LtCol Battistelli committed to reviewing the background on this issue.

9. New Business (COL Mentell)

a. Identification of New Issues for Consideration: There were no new issues presented for consideration.

b. Selection of Next Meeting Date: COL Mentell reminded the council that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council would be in December 2011 at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, with 8 December as the target date.

(1) The purpose of the meeting would be for the components to present potential issues to the council, prioritization of those issues by the council, and development of a strategy for pursuit of those prioritized issues.

(2) LtCol Battistelli asked that COL Mentell discuss with him the concept for the next meeting prior to it being announced.

(3) As a result of that conversation, the concept for the Fall Meeting on 7 and 8 December 2011 was confirmed. The meeting itself will be held in the ECJ1 conference room beginning at 0900 on Thursday, 8 December. On the evening prior, there will be a dinner for members of the council and representatives of ECJ1.

10. Closing Remarks.

a. USAFE: CMSgt Lippert expressed her appreciation for everyone's time and the information generated during the meeting.

b. USAREUR: COL Mentell thanked everybody for their participation and for all they do for Retired Service Members and their Families and Survivors.

c. USEUCOM: LtCol Battistelli pledged continuing support for the council despite the reduction in the personnel in his division.

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11. Adjournment. COL Mentell adjourned the meeting at 1540.

/ original signed /

FRANK BATTISTELLI
Col, USAF
Advisor

/ original signed /

ROBERT MENTELL
COL (USA, Retired)
2011 Chair