



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

DAPE-MPL-RS

3 May 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council

1. The fifty-ninth meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC) was held at the Pentagon from 28 April 2019 – 3 May 2019. 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 reviewed 11 issues nominated by Installation Retiree Councils. Those issues are discussed in detail in the attached Installation Report. The Council extends its gratitude to you and Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey for your consistent support of the Retired Soldier Council.
2. The Total Force Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses represents over 1.24 million people who continue to serve. We are Soldiers for Life and our assessment is that we are at a critical inflection point. We can be that fourth pillar that can enable our Total Army in the Hire and Inspire mission. We are Retired Soldiers who are integrated throughout our nation and abroad to sustain the All Volunteer Force. We understand the culture, we are values-based, and we want to serve our Army.
3. We are a resource to our Army by educating, advocating, and inspiring those to serve our great Army. It is important we engage our citizens on why the Army is a wonderful profession. Also we can truly assist our Soldiers in transition and welcome them into our ranks. This passion resonates in your council and in the Retired Soldier force.
4. In order to operationalize us as a true enabler, we need to ensure we have our Army Senior Leaders full support and emphasis. We know that Mission Command is vital, so your continued emphasis for the Soldier for Life Program and the Retired Soldier population is vital. We need the Commanders, like USAREC and IMCOM, to embrace us and bring us into their formation. We need Senior Mission Commanders to support the Retirement Services Officers, Retiree Appreciation Days, and to make our monthly retirement ceremonies world class.
5. In order to ensure we can be that multi-functional multiplier, we do need your continued support and resources. We need strong and vibrant Retirement Service Officers, we need a means to communicate to our Army and ensure we are current on all the great programs the Army is doing, and we need to send our Retired Soldiers out with first-class services. We are Soldiers for Life, we are Army Strong, and want to remain relevant, but need the means. We have enclosed a thought-provoking white paper containing 13 existing and future possibilities.

DAPE-MPL-RS

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council

6. This volunteer force needs to communicate with each other and those they support. While "dot mil" email addresses may not be feasible for the Retired Soldier population at large, an option is to fund enterprise email accounts for key Retired Soldiers performing volunteer services in support of the Army CSARSC, Installation Retiree Councils and recruiting. Additionally, request the Defense Manpower Data Center to add email addresses to the Retiree Address Finder system so installation RSOs can communicate by email instead of by "snail mail" with the Retired Soldiers they support.

7. There are concerns from our Retired Soldiers that we have included in enclosures of this report. The risk of "broken promises" is real as we see health care challenges, DECA/Commissary changes, and other eroding benefits. We call your attention to it, so you can voice caution to those that claim efficiency but don't see the big picture that Retired Soldiers are the foundation of the All Volunteer Force. Deeds not words build that trust we all believe in about the Army and our service.

8. We extend our thanks and appreciation for the outstanding support and assistance provided by Mr. Mark Overberg, Ms. Maria Bentinck and the Army Retirement Services staff for their work throughout the year supporting our Retired Soldiers, their Families, and this Council. We also extend our thanks and appreciation to the entire group of distinguished guest speakers listed at Enclosure 1 for the invaluable information and insight they provided.

9. We appreciate all the time your staff and interagency briefers spent with us so we can better understand the environment for our forces today. We are excited to be part of your solution to resolve your challenges. Empower us; enable us. We are Soldiers for Life and proud to continue to serve our great Army.

  
RAYMOND F. CHANDLER  
Sergeant Major of the Army  
U.S. Army, Retired  
Co-Chairman

  
DAVID HALVERSON  
Lieutenant General  
U.S. Army, Retired  
Co-Chairman

5 Enclosures

1. Guest Speakers
2. Council Members
3. Ongoing Issues
4. CSA Retired Soldier Council Installation Report
5. White Paper "The Army's largest and most underutilized resource"

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

General James McConville, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army

Lieutenant General Thomas C. Seamands, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army

Lieutenant General Aundre F. Piggee, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4

Major General Frank M. Muth, Commanding General, U.S. Army Recruiting Command

Major General Raymond Dingle, Deputy Commanding General U.S. Army Medical Command/The Surgeon General

Brigadier General Robert W. Bennett, The Adjutant General, U.S. Army Human Resources Command

Brigadier General Amy E. Hannah, Chief of Public Affairs

Brigadier General John B. Richardson IV, Director, Operations, Readiness and Mobilization, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, United States Army

Brigadier General Yesenia R. Rogue, Assistant for Army National Guard Personnel and Talent Management

Captain Edward D. Simmer, USN, Deputy Director TRICARE Health Plan

Colonel Prescott R. Farris, Director, Soldier for Life Program

Command Sergeant Major Melissa A. Judkins, Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Installation Management Command

Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey, Sergeant Major of the Army

Command Sergeant Major John F. Sampa, Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard

Sergeant Major Scott S. Wilder, Sergeant Major, Soldier for Life Program

Mr. Stephen D. Austin, Assistant Chief of Army Reserve

Mr. Mark Overberg, Director, Army Retirement Services

Mr. Robert J. Bianchi, Director and Executive Officer, Defense Commissary Agency

Ms. Julie R. Burandt-Partin, DFAS Retired Pay Director

Mr. Tom C. Shull, Director/Chief Executive Officer, Army and Air Force Exchange

Mr. Leroy Acosta, Assistant National Director, Disabled Veterans of America

Ms. Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division, American Legion

Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars

**2019 CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL ROSTER  
CURRENT MEMBERS**

<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>IMCOM REGION</u></b>	<b><u>INSTALLATION</u></b>
<b><u>Co-Chairmen:</u></b>		
LTG David Halverson	At-Large	At-Large
SMA Raymond F. Chandler	At-Large	At-Large
 <b><u>Members:</u></b>		
MG Robert J. Kasulke	Atlantic	Fort Drum, NY
COL Many-Beans Grinder	Central	Fort Campbell, KY
COL Charles N. Posehn	Central	JB San Antonio, TX
COL Lenore Enzel	Central	Fort Bliss, TX
COL Karl Goetzke	Europe	USAEUR
CW5 David A. Ratliff	Atlantic	Fort Jackson, SC
CSM Ralph Rusch	Korea	Yongsan, Korea
CSM Divina B. Bobb	Central	Fort Hood, TX
SGM Edward Mounts	Central	Fort Sill, OK
SGM Michael Walker	Atlantic	Fort Lee, VA
MSG William Burns	Central	Fort Leonard Wood, MO
MSG Miguel D. J. Padilla	Central	Fort Lewis, WA

## **ONGOING ISSUES**

### **The CSARSC Continues to Work these Issues in Support of Retirees and their Family Members**

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. Additionally support efforts to provide concurrent receipt of both DIC and SBP to surviving spouses.
3. Support the authorization of Space A travel for Surviving Spouses of Retired Service Members. The CSARSC, annually since 2008, recommended approval of a change to this policy. We continue to strongly believe that the execution of this initiative will acknowledge a spouses' long-term commitment to our Army at a very small price given that their priority will only allow them to fly when there are empty seats available on flights. This will send a strong message that our surviving spouses' support of the Army will not be forgotten after the death of their Soldier and that their association with the Army, like their Soldier's, is for life.
4. Continue to oppose the imposition of any fees on the TRICARE for Life beneficiaries. Additionally, the current fee structure for TRICARE Standard and Prime should be maintained at the current levels. Any necessary increases should be limited to the most recent COLA.
5. Support the recommendation to rectify the disparity in the National Guard and Army Reserve early retirement by making the original NDAA legislation (signed on 28 January 2008) and subsequent change retroactive to September 11, 2001.

**ISSUE: 2019-01-01**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Sill, OK Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Retired Soldier access to Primary Care Managers (PCM's) at Military Medical Facilities

**DISCUSSION:** If Retiree's already have off-post PCM's under TRICARE, allow them to maintain their off-post PCM's if a PCM change is requested. As it sits now (Sill specifically) if a Retiree is requesting a PCM change, their only option is Reynolds. The glitch here is that even though they give this as the only option, because Reynolds is short Doctor's, they refer patients off-post anyway because they have burdened an already stressed system and can't support the additional patients like Retiree's. Doesn't make sense and is only creating confusion and delays in the system. I'm sure that Reynolds isn't the only place in the Army that is running into this issue. As we've all seen...Army medical facilities put priority on Active Duty, which is where it should be. Stop playing flip-flop with the Retiree's. When I retired like many of our Council members, I was told, "Get out!" After the first year out of Reynolds, they sent a letter that said, "Come back!". Then, they said "Get out!" again. It's confusing enough for us and harder for family members and the widows. For Retirees that have used the Medical Treatment Facilities' and have a Primary Care Manager when they reach 65 they no longer are eligible to be seen by their PCM. At the age of 65 Retirees are forced to find a new doctor and a facility down town. Again causing undue stress and confusion. With the continued loss of Benefits by Retiree's we are not supporting the Army's theme of *Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier...a Soldier for Life!*

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend that DA/DoD continue to study the cost effectiveness for Retired Soldiers being able to use local military medical facilities, their PCM's and specialists as opposed to being forced to go to the civilian medical community.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL  
CHAIRPERSON(S):**

LTC (Ret) George A. Shell, Co-Chairman, Ft. Sill, OK Retiree Council  
SGM (Ret) Edward D. Mounts, Co-Chairman, Ft. Sill, OK Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** In order to provide continuity of care and reduce hardship on the retiree population, the CSA Retired Soldier Council recommends a liberal policy of approving change of provider requests for care in the community. It is clear that the consolidation of Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) under Defense Health Agency will not open consistent direct care access. This population has more complex healthcare needs and should not be bounced back and forth between MTF and community providers.

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**ISSUE 2019-01-02**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Chiropractic Care for Retired Soldiers

**DISCUSSION:** Currently active duty personnel (including activated National Guard and Reserve members) are allowed to receive Chiropractic care at designated military hospitals and clinics under the Chiropractic Health Care Program. To receive care the active duty member must contact the Primary Care Manager (PCM) who will decide if chiropractic care is required. The service member is then screened to rule out any medical conditions that would prohibit chiropractic care. If appropriate, the PCM will refer the service member to a chiropractor for treatment. The PCM decides on the duration and frequency of chiropractic services. After discharge the retiree must get chiropractic care in the local community at their own expense. So, a soldier who is receiving chiropractic care that is leading to recovery one day is not allowed to receive chiropractic care the day after discharge. Upon discharge the retiree can only get chiropractic care in the local community at their own expense. This seems very unfair to penalize the retiree to pay for the same medical care at his/her own expense.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Chief of Staff of the Army Retired Soldier Council support chiropractic care for retirees under TRICARE as long as the treatments meet the guidelines set forth for active duty personnel for duration and frequency.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (R) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSM (R) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The CSA Retired Soldier Council strongly recommends the Defense Health Agency use industry tested evidence-based standards to approve Chiropractic Care (as well as other complementary integrative healthcare (CIH) modalities such as acupuncture) for retirees. There is ample evidence to show the efficacy and cost savings of CIH which are already used by the Veterans Health Administration.

**ISSUE 2019-01-03**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Drum, NY Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Potential TRICARE Costs Effects on Tricare for Life Beneficiaries

**DISCUSSION:** TRICARE for Life is an optional, supplemental insurance for retirees and their spouse once they reach the age of 65. To be eligible for TRICARE for LIFE, a retiree/spouse must enroll in MEDICARE Part A and purchase MEDICARE Part B. TRICARE for Life costs are offset by MEDICARE Part B, which costs the retiree and spouse a minimum of \$134 per month for each family member, depending on the family income. Therefore an additional TRICARE for LIFE enrollment fee, above and beyond the MEDICARE Part B costs, would create an unfair financial burden for retired military families. Additionally, the upcoming TRICARE Select preferred-provider network option should in no way impact TRICARE for Life beneficiaries financially. Any additional TRICARE premiums have already been paid through honorable service in defense of the United States of America. TRICARE service is an earned benefit, not an entitlement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Oppose any future suggested fees for TRICARE for Life Beneficiaries and ensure annual enrollment remains automatic.

**APPROVED BY GARRISON RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON(S):**

MG (Ret) Robert Kasulke, Co-Chairman, Ft. Drum, NY Retiree Council  
CMSgt (Ret) Patrick R. Rourk, Co-Chairman, Ft. Drum, NY Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The CSA Retired Soldier Council agrees that there should be never be a fee for TRICARE for Life. This benefit was earned through years of dedicated service. Moreover, there is ample evidence that military healthcare costs are not rising. We recommend this issue be revisited annually to insure no costs are attached to TRICARE for Life.

**ISSUE: 2019-02-04**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA, Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Indefinite ID Card for Spouses and Widows/Widowers at Age 65

**DISCUSSION:** This issue seems to surface periodically over the past decade. Spouses and widows/widowers of Active and Reserve Component (AC/RC) retirees are issued an indefinite ID card on renewal at age 75 or older. The Fort Stewart Retiree Council supports previous recommendations that consideration be given to authorize an indefinite ID card to be issued at age 65. Spouses and widows/widowers are currently reissued ID cards, which expire at age 65 due to expiration of civilian medical care and when entitlements to Medicare benefits begin. Subsequently, renewals are issued every 4 years at age 69, 73, and the indefinite ID card after reaching age 75. A replacement is required due to expiration at age 65, it would only be prudent that an indefinite ID card be authorized at age 65 versus age 75. Spouses and widows of the Army's elderly and/or medically challenged retired soldiers experience great inconvenience replacing their IDs every 4 years. A huge cost savings to the Department of Army let alone the Department of Defense could be realized by not having to reissue a new ID card three additional times for spouses and widows/widow(er)s after age 65. This includes not only the potential manpower savings at ID Issuing Facilities but also the savings of not issuing multiple ID cards to these spouses and widows/widowers of Active and Reserve Component (AC/RC) retirees, who have already given so much to the US Army and its components. Many hardships incurred trying to renew a dependent ID could be lessened by issuing indefinite ID cards at age 65.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Chief of Staff of the Army Retired Soldier Council support issuing indefinite ID cards to spouses and widow(er)s of retired AC/RC soldiers at age 65. Any risk associated with the issuance of an indefinite ID card to these spouses and widow(er)s should be negligible through today's DEERS/DoD ID number programs. Thus, the less frequent ID issuance should not only contain costs and efforts at ID card facilities but also demonstrate the Army's improved commitment and support to the spouses and widow(er)s of retired AC/RC soldiers.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL  
CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (R) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council  
CSM (R) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** BG Bennett, The Adjutant General, Army, reported to the CSA Retired Soldiers Council the noteworthy initiative of the Army Project Office to staff a policy change – and DEERS modification – to issue indefinite ID cards to spouses and widows/widowers at age 65. The CSARSC strongly supports this initiative as it offers the opportunity to gain immediate efficiencies and savings in the issuing of ID cards as well as reducing the burden and concern for safety that many

older retirees have when required to travel long distances to the nearest military issuing facility. As part of the staffing of this initiative, the CSARSC also strongly supports an Adjutant General, Army, review of best practices used in other services to reduce waiting times at military issuing facilities (e.g., on-line applications, and the “kiosk” concept).

**ISSUE: 2019-02-05**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA Retired Soldier Council

**SUBJECT:** Continued Eligibility for In-ground Burial of Retired Members of the Armed Forces at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC).

**DISCUSSION:** At the current rate of in-ground burials of thirty per day, ANC will be closed for in-ground burials in approximately twenty-five years

The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to prescribe revised criteria for interment at Arlington National Cemetery that preserve Arlington National Cemetery as an active burial ground "well into the future." The Secretary is required to render a decision no later than 30 Sept 19.

One solution to the problem is to revise and limit eligibility for in-ground burial. Current eligibility for in-ground burial includes members who 1) die on Title 10 active duty other than active duty for training; 2) recipients of the Metal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (Army, Air, and Navy) and the Purple Heart; 3) veterans retired from active duty with pay receiving retired pay, and 4) former Prisoners of War. All of whom earned their eligibility by sacrifice and service to a grateful nation.

Retired Service Members consider the eligibility for burial in ANC a sacred trust. Arbitrarily eliminating their eligibility for burial at ANC is an egregious breach of faith to those Retired Service members who years earlier chose to be buried at Arlington.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That any revised eligibility criteria should continue with no changes to the current eligibility provision for in-ground burial of Retired Members of the Armed Forces.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL  
CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (R) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSM (R) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** On the issue of in-ground burial of Retired Members of the Armed Forces at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), the Council firmly supports options that continue to honor the sacrifices of generations of service members. The Council recognizes the significant challenges, costs and decisions that must be made on this issue and will continue to voice to Army leaders that any decisions made should be rendered in a manner that seeks to safeguard the long-standing trust our retiree population has with Service leaders. The Council strongly urges a strong outreach effort by the Department to the retiree population, service members, and the public at large to explain physical limitations on the expansion of ANC, plans for future development of ANC (e.g., columbaria, and mausoleums), and considerations on modifying eligibility criteria.

**ISSUE: 2019-02-06**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington Retired Soldier Council

**SUBJECT:** Survivor Benefit Plan Cost Refund Payout in a Timely Manner

**DISCUSSION:** The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) was enacted into law 21 September 1972. The law included a dollar-for-dollar offset of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from SBP. A refund is paid to the surviving spouse for the costs deducted for the portion of the SBP benefit not received due to payment of DIC. If the DIC payment offsets the entire SBP payment, all costs will be refunded. Since payments were not taxed when deducted from retired pay, these refunds are taxed as income to the survivor.

The issue is that most surviving spouses are suffering from a traumatic event with losing their spouses and now have to take over household expenditures and responsibilities on their own. SBP cost refund in most cases is a very substantial amount of money to help pay household bills or obligations. Waiting up to a year or longer for these payouts results in a financial hardship for the surviving spouse.

We have documented cases of Surviving Spouses who are financially impacted by the delay of the Defense Finance and Accounting Services Quality Assurance Department. Survivors are being reported by creditors for failing to meet their obligations due to the amount of time taken by Defense Finance and Accounting Services to payout the SBP cost refund.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Conduct an Inspector General Review of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to reduce processing time and improve timely payouts to Surviving Spouses.

**APPROVED BY:** INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC JBLM RETIREE COUNCILCHAIRPERSON (S):

BG (USA Ret) Oscar Hilman, Co-Chairman JBLM Retiree Council, JBLM, WA

CSM (Ret) Lourdes Alvarado-Ramos, Co-Chairman JBLM Retiree Council, JBLM, WA

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The Council understands this Installation Council initiative is focused on processes and is not a request for substantive changes to current standards for refund of SBP costs. With this understanding, the Council fully supports an appropriate review of the DFAS processes to refund SBP costs. This can be accomplished by either subject matter experts within DFAS (to include the Inspector General of DFAS), or outside reviewers appointed by the Army leadership. After completion of this review, the Council further supports the implementation of measurable standards to ensure timely payouts of SBP to Surviving Spouses.

**ISSUE: 2019-02-07**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA Retired Soldier Council

**SUBJECT:** Casualty Assistance to Survivors of Retired Soldiers

**DISCUSSION:** The Fort Stewart, GA Retired Soldier Council submitted a recommendation to both the 2017 and 2018 CSA Retired Soldier Council that the CSA direct the Army Staff to review the feasibility of training and utilizing Retired Soldiers as Casualty Assistance Officers/Noncommissioned Officers for surviving spouses of Retired Soldiers. CSA Retired Soldier Council comments on Issue 2018-02-13 recognized that having trained Retired Soldiers who are authorized to provide casualty assistance when needed, can be a great resource for our military communities. At many posts volunteers already work closely in an unofficial status with local Retirement Service Office (RSO) and Casualty Assistance Office (CAO) to support survivors. This support varies from installation to installation and there is not an established program to capitalize on the experience, talents and energy of Retired Soldiers in meeting this important mission.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Division, United States Human Resources Command, develop a formal process to select and train Retired Soldiers who volunteer to serve as Casualty Assistance Officers (CAOs) or Casualty Assistance Noncommissioned Officers (CANCOS) for surviving spouses of Retired Soldiers. This should include a training program that provides the skills and certification to serve as CAOs, as well as a public relations campaign to encourage Retired Soldiers to volunteer.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (R) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSM (R) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

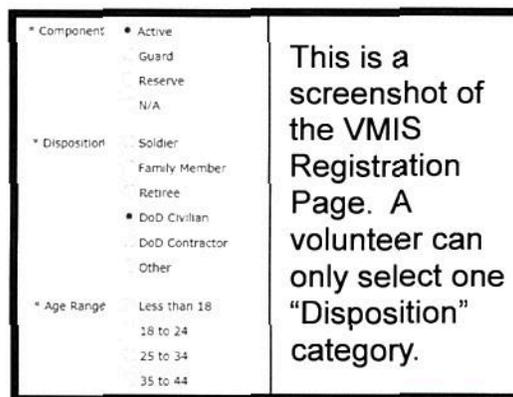
**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** BG Bennett, The Adjutant General, Army, reported to the CSARSC the noteworthy Human Resources Command initiative to conduct a comprehensive review of this issue. As briefed, a broad range of stakeholders would study the issue, define roles and responsibilities, and then develop courses of action. The CSARSC applauds this effort as it offers great potential to provide additional support to survivors by leveraging the significant capabilities of Retired Soldier volunteers. As part of this review, the CSARSC urges study of what authorities need to be provided to CMAOD and the CACs to allow them to train, manage, and fund a volunteer pool of Retired Soldiers to support this initiative.

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Army in Europe

**SUBJECT:** Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS) Enhancement

**DISCUSSION:** I am a Retired Soldier who also has status as a Family Member and a DOD Civilian. However, when I enroll in VMIS, I am only able to claim one of these status categories to account for my volunteer hours. This renders the data collected, and reports generated, by VMIS as incomplete and unclear. The local commander who is interested in the number of volunteer hours that Retired Soldiers contribute to the community will never be able to gain an accurate assessment given the current limitations of VMIS.

This issue has been elevated to the CSARSC twice (2016 and 2017) and the response to the CSARSC from IMCOM both times was that the VMIS software was being updated to resolve the lack of clarity on who, by category (Soldier, Family Member, Retired, DOD Civilian, DOD Contractor, Other) is actually volunteering in our military communities. However, an investigation into VMIS has revealed that the sought after improvement to VMIS has not happened.



We continue to assert that VMIS must allow an individual, when registering in VMIS, to claim all status categories that apply to them. Only then will we be able to accurately query the data to determine to overall impact each population of volunteers contributes to readiness.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Chief of Staff, Army, urge the Commander, U.S. Army Installation Management Comment, to fix the VMIS Registration process so that registering volunteers can claim all status categories within the "Disposition" area for which they qualify.

**APPROVED BY ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:**  
LTC (Ret) David Fulton, President, Army in Europe Retired Soldier Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The primary purpose of VMIS system was designed to track volunteer hours and not the categories of who performed the volunteer hours (i.e. Family Member, Retiree, etc). The specific category of the volunteer information is "nice to have" but not required information. The VMIS program may no longer be viable and may be terminated. Spending funds to update the VMIS

software is not recommended and would not be in the best interests of the Army. The CSARSC does not support the recommendation at this time.

**ISSUE 2019-03-09**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council: Army in Europe**

**SUBJECT: Region Specific Retiree Information**

**DISCUSSION:** Military Retirees are often not aware of the challenges they'll face when retiring outside the United States and its territories, particularly in regard to compliance with host nation laws and statutes. To assist Retired Soldiers in making better informed decisions, given that the choice of a retirement location can significantly impact a Retiree's benefits and entitlements, information should be readily available to educate the Retiree on the key issues/decisions they will face when retiring outside the US and its territories. For example, when a Retiree transitions themselves into a residency VISA status in a location outside the US and its territories, that Retiree will fall under host nation laws and could be subject to local taxes, employment permits and regulations, depending on the circumstances and location. Depending on the selected country of residence, Retired Soldiers can be required to pay customs fees or value added taxes when shopping at AAFES and DECA outlets or receiving gifts or merchandise from the United States. It is also not commonly known that Retired Soldiers on short duration visits to foreign locations such as Germany are not automatically eligible for access to US military facilities for shopping or recreation (e.g., AFRC at Garmisch). Much like our U.S. States, each nation has different standards and rules for administering and monitoring support to US military Retirees who elect to permanently reside in their jurisdiction.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Army G1 Soldier for Life Program publish information outlining the basic benefit / entitlement differences and the requirements for permanent residency in the more countries where Soldiers most frequently elect to reside during their retirement, i.e. Germany, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, Korea, Panama, and Japan. Retiring Soldiers should be required to formally acknowledge these differences, and their personal responsibility to comply with host nation laws, at the time of their retirement. The information could be collected from the Installation Management Command and/or HQs G1 in coordination with legal staffs serving in each of the previously identified nations. The information could be published in a form similar to the State/Territory Benefits found on the MyArmyBenefits webpage at <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits> or in the form of an Information/Matrix for Retirement Brochures and become a regular annual feature of Army Echoes. This information would also serve to advise retirees of the restrictions to access U.S. facilities in the different countries they wish to visit when traveling. It is also recommended that any published information highlight the fact that medical support using TRICARE and Medicare is often limited, if not fully restricted, in many areas outside the US and its territories. Finally, this requirement would mirror the overseas separation provision applied to separating or discharged Soldiers who elect an "overseas out."

**APPROVED BY ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON:** LTC (Ret) David Fulton,  
President, Army in Europe Retired Soldier Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The CSARSC supports having this information published in a form similar to the State/Territory Benefits found on the MyArmyBenefits webpage at <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits> or in the form of an information page for Retirement Brochures and become a regular annual feature of Army Echoes. Since DA RSO has a list of the top 11 countries where retired Soldiers relocate, this information would serve to advise retirees of the restrictions to access U.S. facilities in the different countries they wish to reside or visit. It is also recommended that any published information highlight the fact that medical support using TRICARE and Medicare is often limited, if not fully restricted, in many areas outside the US and its territories. Finally, this requirement would mirror the overseas separation provision applied to separating or discharged Soldiers who elect an "overseas out." The Council supports this recommendation.

**ISSUE: 2019-03-10**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Provide Army RSOs with Retiree Contact Information

**DISCUSSION:** In support of Army Regulation 600–8–7, Retirement Services Program, it is imperative that the Army communicates with retirees and their families reducing concerns, issues and rumors. Retirees need to know about the many changes that impact them -such as medical and pay benefits. Thus, the Army G1 RSO should be working with DFAS – Cleveland, to supply the Post RSOs with retiree contact information (i.e. the first list of those retired soldiers with E-Mail addresses and USPS addresses, and a second list of those retired soldiers with only USPS addresses). Like with other installations, the Fort Stewart RSO has very limited funds, and by all indications the next fiscal year will be worse. In February 2017, Fort Stewart spent in excess of \$28,000 on printing and postage for mailing hardcopy flyers informing retired soldiers and their families of its Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD). This mailing cost has now become prohibitive for Fort Stewart. That is why the Fort Stewart RSO and its Retiree Council is suggesting a way to better communicate with and disseminate information to retirees in its service region. Obviously the various means of technology will be the fastest and most inexpensive method of communication with those retirees who receive information in print fashion. But what about those retired soldiers who are not connected digitally?

In 2016 DFAS – Cleveland provided the Fort Stewart RSO with 60,000+ USPS addresses on retired soldiers in Fort Stewart's service area. This was a combination of retired soldiers who had both E-Mail addresses and USPS addresses, and those retired soldiers that had only USPS addresses. If DFAS - Cleveland could separate from this list those retired soldiers who have E-Mail addresses, leaving a contact listing of retired soldiers who only have USPS addresses, an effort like this would cut in half the \$28,000 Fort Stewart spent on printing and postage for mailing hardcopy flyers to the retired soldiers within their service region.

A solid supporter, DFAS – Cleveland also provided a 30,000+ "ListServ" of retired soldiers with their E-Mail addresses, within the Fort Stewart's service area. Fort Stewart RSO and its Retiree Council will continue to emphasize using E-Mail addresses to send flyers informing retired soldiers and their families of its annual RAD.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council continue to make this this issue a high priority until DFAS or another agency provides the appropriate email contact information lists to the RSOs. We believe the most viable and reliable means of communication is direct e-mail and all efforts should be focused on increasing this method of reaching Retirees in our geographic area.

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (Ret) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Ft. Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSM (Ret) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Ft. Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The Council acknowledges that this issue has been brought to our attention and responses were provided by G1, DMDC and DFAS on multiple occasions. We also agree this is an issue which has not been resolved or adequately addressed by these agencies to date. It would be in the best interest of all parties for this issue to be resolved in favor of RSOs by providing them ready access to the current list of Retired Soldiers email addresses within their catchment areas. The current Retiree Address Finder (RAF) used by the RSOs only displays street or PO Box addresses used by USPS. DFAS maintains a current database for all earned benefits recipients that includes their email addresses and is a much more accurate list of Retiree contact information. DFAS has a 55% usage rate for MyPay. DFAS can send a "Smart Document" to specific Retirees if requested by the RSO. Obtaining and utilizing an email list to notify the Retiree population could save the Department of the Army hundreds of thousands of dollars in printing costs for Retiree Bulletins, RAD information, and the associated postage costs. The ability to access the email addresses would eliminate the need for printing and postage and allow for near-instant communication with Retirees. The Council strongly supports this recommendation.

**ISSUE: 2019-03-11**

**INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC Council:** Fort Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**SUBJECT:** Using Web Site and Social Media to Better Support Retirees

**DISCUSSION:** Reservists across the country need to be aware of all their benefits. Transition and accredited financial counselors need to be readily available as early as 18-12 months before their exit from the military, in order to acquire as much knowledge of available support and resources possible, in order to make informed decisions - the values of Soldier for Life. Our use of the electronic highway can greatly enhance RSO series of sessions by re-enforcing that retirement is a process. Each Army RSO should establish and keep current a Web Site in support of Army retirees and their families. This Army RSO retiree web site might be a stand-alone web site but better supported and utilized by retirees if it is attached to the web site of the respective Army RSO's Post (i.e. Fort Stewart, GA). Since the Post's Public Affairs Office (PAO) supports the Post web site then it would make sense that some digital support would be available to the RSO. The budgets of all Army Posts and their RSOs are being constrained. To continue to best support retired soldiers, teaming digital efforts now are more critical than ever.

Besides web based information transfer, another cost effective way to communicate to retired soldier and their families is through the use of social media. The Army Post's PAO along with the respective RSO should establish an Army Post retiree social media page on one or more of the established media sites (Face book, Twitter, and Instagram). These media sites would allow an instantaneous flow of information at no cost, with minimal overhead being involved in maintaining each site.

DFAS – Cleveland could supply to each retired soldier in the Post's service region their respective Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), along with the social media address for the Post's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. These actions would continue to support the Army's "Soldier for Life" program by conveying appropriate messages to the retired soldier population through these media forms.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council continue to retain this issue and monitor the Army G1's establishment of social media sites (FB, Twitter, and Instagram).

**APPROVED BY INSTALLATION/GARRISON/ASCC RETIREE COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON(S):**

COL (Ret) Gerald E. Thompson, Co-Chairman, Ft. Stewart, GA Retiree Council

CSM (Ret) Tommy A. Williams, Co-Chairman, Ft. Stewart, GA Retiree Council

**CSA RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL COMMENTS:** The Army Retirement Services Office website provides access to current initiatives and issues the Army is addressing on behalf of all Retired Soldiers. In addition to the SFL website all Army and DoD websites can be accessed through DS-LOGON. Once a Retired Soldier has registered for an account, they will have access to MILCONNECT, TRICARE, DFAS, DEERS, HRC and MyHealth. It is a Retired Soldier's responsibility to provide current information

to the site. The only information will be what the Soldier has provided to the site. The Council has already addressed this issue several times and recommends closure of this issue with no additional action required.