

COMMANDER'S RETIREE COUNCIL  
Fort Rucker, Alabama

The Commander's Retiree Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on 3 August 2006. It was the 215<sup>th</sup> regularly scheduled meeting since the Council was established in 1973.

1. Members present/absent and advisors and guests present were:

MEMBERS (Army retiree, except as indicated)

PRESENT

COL Bob Bunting, Co-Ch	CSM Charles E. Frye Co-Ch
COL James E. Hyers	CSM William Jolley
COL Charles A. Block (USMC)	CSM James W. Harris
LTC Clarence R. Collins	SGM Lloyd M. Rogers, Assoc. Sec
LTC James E. Mellish	SGM Samuel V. MacMaster
CDR James E. Cobb	1SG Jackie Ray
	1SG John J. McCracken, Jr. (USAF)
	SFC Joseph N. Barnes

MEMBERS ABSENT

COL William E. Crouch	COL Stanley S. Heath
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ADVISORS PRESENT

COL Michael Kaminski, CDR LAHC  
Mr. George Steuber, Deputy to the Garrison Cmdr  
Ms. Deborah L. Seimer, AG  
Ms. Diane Snodgrass, AAFES Manager  
Mr. Tim Laster, DMWR  
Mr. Chris Moore, RSO  
Mr. Mike O'Meara, Commissary  
Mr. Bill Coker, PAO

GUESTS

Ms. Sue Jackson, ACS

2. CSM Frye called the meeting to order at 1135. He stated that SGM MacMaster has been nominated as a candidate for the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council.
3. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written.

4. Old Business -- COL Block reported the retiree email problem had been solved.

5. Committee Reports

a. Public Affairs -- SGM MacMaster gave each member a copy of the Post calendar. The AUSA breakfast meeting place for 17 August had been changed to the Methodist Church in Ozark.

b. Legislative Affairs - COL Hyers reported the following: Senators Bill Nelson and Chuck Nagel have sent a letter to the other senators asking them to hold firm in retaining the two key SBP fixes in the FY2007 Defense Authorization Bill; the Senate-passed version of the bill would end the reduction of VA survivor benefits from SBP annuities and accelerate the effective date of the 30-year paid-up SBP coverage to 1 Oct 06 from the currently approved 1 Oct 08. The House did not address these issues and now House and Senate negotiators will decide whether to keep the provisions or drop them. The Military Coalition prioritized the following differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill; barring a House-proposed 70% increase in retail network pharmacy co-pays pending a review of alternative ways to reduce military health costs in ways that do not penalize beneficiaries; adopting Senate-passed initiatives to end deduction of VA survivor benefits from military SBP annuities and implement 30-year, paid-up SBP coverage as of 1 Oct 06; providing full concurrent receipt for otherwise qualifying retirees rated by the VA as "unemployable", retroactive to 1 Jan 05, as approved by the Senate; and adopting a Senate proposal to reduce the Guard and Reserve retirement age by three months for each 90 days mobilized to active duty since 11 Sep 01. Current law projects a 4.6% reduction in Medicare/TRICARE payments to doctors, starting in January 2007 with larger cuts coming in years ahead which will discourage doctors from accepting more of these patients. Momentum seems to be building among influential legislators to reverse these trends and increase the payment rates. COL Block added that legislation should be changed to allow the employer and retired military employees to set aside part of the employee's compensation in a tax free account to help pay for certain IRS approved benefits such as dental, vision, insurance, and health care. Current proposed legislation would outlaw the payment of TRICARE fees by the employee with these pre-tax funds. This discriminates against military retirees because federal civilian retirees in a second career have no such limitations and can have their employers reimburse them for their FEHBP premiums and co-pays.

c. Health Care -- CSM Harris reported the pharmacy is losing one pharmacist. There is an urgent need for Red Cross volunteers at the clinic. The VA Clinic is still in the planning stages but it is scheduled for the future.

d. Volunteer Program -- SFC Barnes reported no "Volunteer of the Month" because none of the units had sent in candidates names.

e. Consolidated Club System -- Mr. Laster stated the Military Idol competition starts 4 August at the Landing. The next Prime Rib Night is 27 August. The last one went well with over 100 diners.

f. Commissary – Mr. O’Meara reported a case lot sale 15-16 September. Plenty of drinks like water and Gatorade are on-hand. Plastic bags are made with oil and their price has gone up so they are no longer offered at checkout stands. Expect the drought to cause food prices to go up. Fans have been installed in the warehouse to circulate the air.

g. PX – Ms. Snodgrass distributed AAFES advertising handouts. There will be two UFC boxers coming in August to sign autographs. While here, they will participate in a run with the soldiers. A 10% sale on all items that are in the category of school supplies was held 4-6 Aug ust. The PX is scheduled for a new roof in about three weeks.

h. Golf Course – Mr. Laster stated there were several trees down from the storm but The Red and Blue Courses were still playable.

i. Equestrian Center – Mr. Laster reported an Open Horse Show on 26 August.

j. Outdoor Recreation – Mr. Laster reported they were waiting for final estimates from the Corps of Engineers for cost of building cabins on the lake.

k. Bowling Alley – No report.

l. RAD – No report

6. Advisors Comments –

a. Ms. Jackson reported there were 130 interviewers signed up for the Job Fair on 15 August. There are still a few slots open. She requested and received volunteers to bring up retiree issues at the Family Action Plan Symposium on 17-18 October 2006.

b. Mr. Laster reported the Outdoors Adventures Expo at Yano Hall is set for 26-27 August with over 30 venders signed up. Admission will be \$2. Activities or vendors for events such as hunting, fishing, golf, skate boarding, kids’ fishing, bow hunting demonstrations, RVs and a nature photo contest.

c. Mr. Steuber stated the funding for 2007 will based on the 2005 execution budget. Ft. Rucker needs \$4.2 million to remain status quo; as of now the post will receive only \$1.7 million. The installation is still operating under a tight budget and this is not expected to change in the near future. An example was given regarding the temporary position of the RSO and the installations attempts to keep the slot funded.

7. New Business – None

8. General Comments – None

9. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1250. The next scheduled meeting will be held at the Aviators' Landing on 7 September 2006 at 1130.

Retiree Council Minutes, 3 August 2007

Approved via email 10 Aug 06

BOB BUNTING

COL, Retired

Co-Chairman

Approved via email 10 Aug 06

CHARLES E. FRYE

CSM, Retired

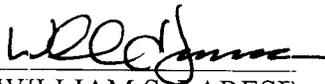
Co-Chairman

Approved via email 10 Aug 06

LLOYD M. ROGERS

SGM, Retired

Association Secretary

 **AUG 21 2007**

WILLIAM S. LARESE

Colonel, Aviation

Garrison Commander