

COMMANDER'S RETIREE COUNCIL
Fort Rucker, Alabama

The Commander's Retiree Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on 6 August 2009. It was the 249th 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

BG Douglas Smith	CSM Gene Nelson
COL Bob Bunting	SGM Sam McMaster
COL James E. Hyers	SMS Jean A. Woodruff, USAF
COL Stan Heath	SFC Ralph Reed
COL Emil Zimmerman	EOC Fred Griffin, USN
LTC Clarence Collins	
LTC Carolyn Bost-Pittman	
CW4 Bob Cooper	

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mrs. Marie Wilkins	CSM James W. Harris
	SFC Bernett Jergenson
	1SG Ken Prier
	1SG Frank Ellerkanp

ADVISORS PRESENT

COL Yvette Kelley, GC	Ms. Sheryl Lowell, PAO
COL Yolanda Ruiz-Isales, LAHC	Mr. Mike O'Meara, Commissary
Mr. Justin Mitchell, DGC	Ms. Ellen Rutledge, AAFES
Mr. Tim Laster, DFMWR	Mr. Chris Moore, RSO

2. CSM Nelson called the meeting to order at 1130.
3. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written.
4. Guests – Robert Bridgewater, ICE and Installation Customer Service Representative, explained the importance of responding to the annual September customer service assessment. This survey helps improve services on Fort Rucker. Ms. Donna McGee from Covenant Hospice explained some of the services Covenant provides. They aid in locating rural and homeless veterans, sending patients on “Honor Flights”, and conducting ceremonies in nursing homes. Covenant serves eight nursing homes and oversees the Military Ambassadors’ Volunteer Program.
5. Old Business – None.
6. Committee Reports:

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a. Public Affairs – SGM McMaster provided a calendar of upcoming events. Highlights included the Job Fair, Oktoberfest, US Army Soldier Show, and the Hispanic Heritage Gate-to-Gate Run.

b. Legislative Affairs – COL Hyers reported that Senator Coburn stymied Senator Reid's Concurrent Receipt Amendment which would have phased out the disability offset for all Chapter 61 Retirees over a five-year period. The concurrent receipt issue for this year's defense bill remains a very strong possibility. The VA has experienced a 10% increase in the number of claims completed this year compared to last. Progress has been made, but more work needs to be done to streamline the disability evaluation and the claims process. The ultimate goal is to migrate to a paperless claims processing environment. The Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee received an update from DOD and VA leadership on disability claims and ongoing seamless transition efforts being coordinated between the two agencies on Capitol Hill. The Defense Appropriations Bill passed the House. The House did back President Obama's push to end production of the Air Force's F-22 fighter program; more than \$300 million dollars were diverted to other accounts. The Senate is not expected to take up its version of the Defense Appropriations Bill until September.

c. Health Care – COL Ruiz-Isales reported that the CT/MRI cost is \$3 million dollars and must show a profit by 2012. The VA may get 50% of the appointments to increase the scanner's return on investment. The ramp to the VA Clinic at LAHC is finished. Work is in progress to establish a single medical record system. COL Ruiz-Isales also reported that the flu vaccine may be ready earlier than expected. Health care reforms in the news will not impact VA nor TRICARE.

d. Voluntary Support Program – No report.

e. Commissary – Mr. O'Meara reminded everyone that Halloween candy will be available 10 Aug, the next case lot sale is 18-20 Sep, and plastic recycling is now in effect.

f. Community Activity Center – LTC Collins reported the club has a new general manager, Stephen Peacock, and the old "Dawn Patrol" lounge will open 28 August with a new name, "The Landing Zone". Starbucks will be coming soon.

g. PX – Ms. Rutledge discussed the "End of Summer" bash that will offer bicycles for 20% off. Prizes will be awarded, and everyone can show their talent at karaoke. Apple computers are coming 5 Sep, and 11 Sep will kick off the opening of "Toyland" for the Christmas season. Customers get 20 cents off per gallon 21-23 Aug if they fill up using their STARCARD.

h. Golf Course – CW4 Cooper reported there was a 23 July meeting, and membership is down from 240 members to 206. Work continues on the driving range, and there are 26 Intramural teams.

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i. Equestrian Center – COL Heath reported there are no shows scheduled for August, and stated past shows have been cancelled because of low entries. Entries for shows will determine if any new show events will be scheduled.

j. Outdoor Recreation – No report.

k. Bowling Alley – No report.

l. RAD – LTC Bost-Pittman asked for 10 volunteers from the Council to assist with the RAD. She will report on the final layout for the event at the next meeting.

7. Advisors' Comments.

a. COL Kelley discussed local burglaries, counterfeit money, the law enforcement breakfast, back-to-school speed limits, and the AFAP conference in October. MWR will collect issues in September for the AFAP. COL Kelley stated the Starbucks hours will be from 0600-1100 and reported on the renovation of the Andrews fitness center. COL Kelley introduced the new Deputy Garrison Commander, Justin Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell is from Montana and comes to us from the War College.

b. Honor flights are filled up through 24 Apr 2010. Efforts are underway to get a larger plane for the last flights.

8. New Business – None.

9. The meeting adjourned at 1240. The next scheduled meeting will be at The Landing, 1130, 3 September 2009.

Approved via-email

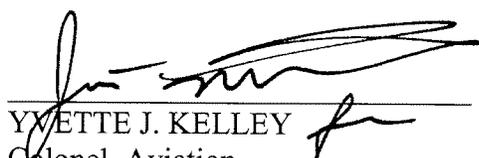
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