

Issue 1-21
FALL 2021



**U.S. ARMY AVIATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA
“Our Mission is Warfighting!”**



Special Points
of Interest:

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COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S
COLUMN**

**47TH ANNUAL RETIREE
APPRECIATION DAY —
VIRTUAL (ON-LINE)**

MILITARY.COM

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**“FIND IT ON THE WEB”
INFORMATION AT YOUR
FINGERTIPS**

RETIREMENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

Fort Rucker Retiree Council Chairman's Column — COL(R) Paul L. English, Jr.

On behalf of your Ft. Rucker Retiree Council, I welcome you to the 2021 iteration of the electronic Retirement Services Newsletter. In last year's Newsletter, we expressed hope that we would soon see a return to more normal times. Unfortunately, we continue to grapple with significant health challenges here in the Southeast U.S. These challenges move us to seek new ways to share information and to maintain contact with friends, family and business associates while reducing risks associated with large gatherings. So, rather than canceling Retiree Appreciation Day activities as was done last year, the Army and Ft. Rucker have decided to transition to a “virtual” Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) format that will be hosted on Ft. Rucker's Face-book page. On the next page of this year's Retirement Services Newsletter, RSO Chris Moore provides an overview of how this new format will work and how you can participate. While this on-line format will clearly not allow some of the benefits we enjoyed during past events, particularly health screenings and flu shots, it will provide RAD participants access to current information directly from the Ft. Rucker leaders and staff agencies. We look forward to your feedback on the virtual RAD. Speaking to the topic of vaccinations directly, advice from the Commander of Lyster Army Health Clinic is for vulnerable retiree populations to obtain the flu and other vaccines at the earliest opportunity from their local pharmacy or other provider. We on the Ft. Rucker Retiree Council are certainly disappointed we will not get to see you during the RAD event this year, but we hold great hope that this virtual format event will be interesting and informative. As I close this year's note, I take this opportunity to once again commend members of your Fort Rucker Retiree Council for their work. I would also ask each of you to consider joining your Council. We still have several important positions open and we need to bring new volunteers onto the Council to ensure we remain vibrant and relevant to the changing needs of the retired community. Joining the Council will give you an opportunity to meet monthly with Ft. Rucker's senior leaders and ensure your perspective is considered effecting Ft. Rucker's future. Your Retiree Council meets at the Landing Zone on Ft. Rucker at 1130 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month with the exceptions of January and July. Visitors are always welcome. Please contact me or the RSO, Mr. Chris Moore for more information about joining the Council. I sincerely hope we are all able to gather together once again for a more traditional RAD event in 2022. COL(R) Paul L. English, Jr.



Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier...a Soldier for Life!



THE 47TH ANNUAL FORT RUCKER RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY IS 29 OCTOBER 2021 AND IS BEING HELD VIRTUALLY!!

This year's annual Retiree Appreciation Day is being exclusively held virtually through the Fort Rucker Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ftrucker/>. We realize that it is not identical to previous RADs, but it is our hope that the virtual RAD will be educational, interesting, and something you can find useful throughout the year. We will have welcoming videos from the chain of command as well as informative videos from service providers you know and trust including Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and Soldier for Life, Retirement Services (SFL-RSO). The videos will be released throughout the day so check back often.



DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS) CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone: 1-800-321-1080
Fax: 1-800-469-6559
The mailing addresses are:

For *Retirees*:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1200

For *Annuitants* collecting Survivors Benefits:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1300

COMMONLY REFERENCED NUMBERS

Fort Rucker Directory Assistance	334-255-1110
Fort Rucker Retirement Services	334-255-9739
Fort Rucker Casualty Office	334-255-9081
Fort Rucker ID Card Section	334-255-2182
Dept. of Veterans Affairs	800-827-1000
DFAS-Cleveland	800-321-1080
DFAS-Cleveland (Fax #)	800-469-6559
TSGLI	800-237-1336
SGLI/VGLI	800-419-1473
Social Security Administration	800-772-1213
Office of Personnel Management	888-767-6738
<i>(for Civil Service Retirements)</i>	
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RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Greetings to each of you from Fort Rucker. As always, let me thank you for your service first. As you read in COL(R) English's note, we are excited to report that Fort Rucker will host its first virtual Retiree Appreciation Day this year. Last year's RAD was suspended due to COVID-19 so we consider this as another step on the road to "normal." Although a different product from RAD physically held here, we see this as an opportunity for Retirees and Family Members throughout Fort Rucker's area or responsibility to participate in our RAD, regardless of geographical separation. If you want to jump ahead, some details of the event can be found in the next column.

As this bulletin is prepared, the Department of Defense has recently changed COVID-19 virus related requirements on federal installations and may do so again by the time you read this. Regardless, MG David J. Francis and the new Garrison Commander, COL Robert J. Holcombe are doing everything they can to guarantee the safety of our Soldiers, Retirees, Civilians and their Families during this period. Installation services may be impacted and adjustments may be made in some manner but I can assure you, Fort Rucker is open.

As I have said before, the focus for me and my office continues to be you, the Retiree, and your family. I return calls, so please contact me at 334-255-9739 or 800-240-9373. If you get my answering machine, please leave a message and a contact number or email me at usarmy.rucker.rso@mail.mil and I will get in touch with you. **Chris Moore, RSO**

FORT RUCKER RETIREMENT SERVICES

OFFICE (RSO) WEBSITE – To access the Fort Rucker Retirement Services Office website, cut and paste this address:

<https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/about/garrison/dhr/rso>.

NEED INFO? TRY MILITARY.COM

Military.com is a news and resource website for military members, veterans and their families. They enable the millions of Americans with military affinity to access benefits, find jobs, enjoy military discounts, and stay connected. Founded in 1999, *Military.com* works to help make your life simpler. Membership is free. Visit them at www.military.com.

DID YOU KNOW? DFAS RECOUPS A RETIREE'S FINAL PAY AT DEATH.

Often, surviving spouses are surprised to learn that upon notification of death, DFAS collects the Retiree's final pay, even at the end of a month. Unclaimed compensation (arrear of pay) must be requested by the beneficiary. To claim this final pay, a Standard Form 1174 must be submitted after the Retiree's death. When needed, the form may be downloaded via DFAS' website www.dfas.mil, or by calling them at 800-321-1080. If the application is not filed along with a death certificate, the arrears of pay is not returned to the surviving spouse/Retiree's estate.

NEED PROOF OF YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME?

Your Retiree Account Statement (RAS) is a DFAS annual leave and earnings statement containing information on pay and deductions that many potential creditors require. Your latest RAS is on myPay at mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx. If your lender asks for a pay verification letter, a generic "Pay Verification Letter" is available online. If you cannot access myPay and need a hard copy RAS and verification letter mailed to you, call the DFAS Customer Care Center at 1-800-321-1080.

DFAS: UPDATE ADDRESS AND BENEFICIARIES

Every year someone contacts me about a missed document. Want to ensure proper receipt of your tax documents, Retiree Account Statements (RAS), and the latest Retiree information from the *Echoes*? Keep your mailing address current by calling DFAS toll free at 1-800-321-1080.



OBTAIN OR RENEW YOUR ID CARDS – *Effective June 2, 2021, all dependent, retiree and DAV card holders (USID) with an expiration date between January 1, 2020 and July 31,*

2021, were extended to January 31, 2022. Per Under Secretary of Defense. The ID card section is in the Soldier Service Center, Building 5700, Room 160. Operating hours are M-F from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For information, call 334-255-2182. Duty hours are set aside for *appointments only*. Appointments can be made via the internet up to 60 days out. To make an appointment or locate an ID/DEERS office visit <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>. You are not limited to visiting an Army installation, just enter your zip code and the radius you want to search.

UPDATING ADDRESS AND BENEFICIARIES

DEERS RESPONSIBILITY - Sponsors must ensure their DEERS records are up-to-date. Events such as birth, death, divorce, etc., affect benefit eligibility. Failure to update DEERS could result in the sponsor being held responsible for claims filed on unauthorized family members.



NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER ONLINE RECORDS REQUEST

The National Personnel Records Center website is available for veterans to request copies of their DD Form 214 at www.archives.gov/veterans. Veterans and next-of-kin of deceased former military members may also use the system for proof for insurance, education, or employment purposes.



LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

– Retirees and their Families are entitled to FREE legal assistance from a licensed attorney. The Legal Assistance Office provides assistance with powers of attorney, notarizations, wills, property issues, income tax preparation, debt collection, landlord/tenant, and much more! Notarizations and powers of attorney are done on a walk-in basis; all other consultations require an appointment. Contact their office at 334-255-3482, or online by going to www.facebook.com/RuckerLAO. Their office is located in Suite 320, Soldier Service Center. Their hours are: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 0830-1600, and Thursday, 1200-1630.

THE POST EXCHANGE (AAFES)

A non-appropriated fund instrumentality operating almost exclusively through funds generated from sales. The Exchange contributes to military MWR and service programs. Exchange earnings are also used to build new stores and renovate existing facilities. For information on local events and special sales contact 334-503-9044, Ext 211.



CASUALTY REPORTING PROCEDURES

– Retiree deaths should be reported as soon as possible to DFAS at 1-800-321-1080. Be prepared to provide the Retiree's name, social security number and date of death. Fort Rucker provides an Honors Team for deceased U.S. Army active duty Soldiers, Retirees, POWs, honorably discharged veterans, and Medal of Honor recipients for most of Alabama and the Florida panhandle. Funeral honors should be requested Monday-Friday by the funeral director by calling the Fort Rucker Casualty Office at 334-255-9081 or 800-661-1407 not less than 24 hours prior to the funeral. For honors in Mississippi contact Fort Polk's Casualty Office at 888-474-0377. Verification, i.e., DD Form 214 or similar discharge document, must be provided showing honorable service.



FORT RUCKER FAMILY & MWR (334) 255-2100

WEBSITE: For all of your **MWR Facility and Program information** please visit our **Website** **Link** <https://rucker.armymwr.com/>

or **Scan the QR Code** below with your mobile phone:



WELCOME GUIDE / PROGRAM & FACILITY INFO: For a copy of our **2021 Welcome Guide** which includes contact information, hours of operation and descriptions of each facility, program and what they offer please **Click** or **Copy Link** [https://rucker.armymwr.com/application/files/5416/1366/9436/2021 Welcome Guide website.pdf](https://rucker.armymwr.com/application/files/5416/1366/9436/2021_Welcome_Guide_website.pdf)

or **Scan the QR Code** below with your mobile phone:



SOCIAL MEDIA / FACEBOOK:

Stay informed, and up-to-date by visiting us on **Facebook – Fort Rucker MWR**. “Like” our page and get up to date information on events, programs, updates on community information, and any changes that might be important to know. Please visit our **Facebook** **Link** <https://www.facebook.com/ftruckermwr>

or **Scan the QR Code** below with your mobile phone:



Army Community Service (ACS)

ACS provides a wide range of information and services for Soldiers and Family members, Retirees, and Survivors including financial readiness, AER, Army Volunteer Corps, Employment Readiness, Family Advocacy Program, Information and Referral, Relocation Readiness Program, and Survivor Outreach Services.

There is a New ACS AFWP. The AFWP is a centralized , online hub/website where Service members, their Families, Retirees, and Army professionals can find helpful resources related to ACS, and access to supporting systems. For access to the **ACS AFWP website** please **Click** or **Copy Link** <https://www.armyfamilywebportal.com/>

or **Scan the QR Code** below with your mobile phone:



DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY (DeCA)

Our Commissary Officer, Ms. Marisol Hennessey, encourages every eligible patron visiting Fort Rucker to stop by and see how much money they can save by shopping with DeCA. Bulk bundles are still being offered at a great savings in the meat department. Packaged in three variations, these bundles feature a mix of items at a price designed to save you money. As always, she wants to emphasize special orders are welcome and holiday items will start showing up on store shelves soon. The Commissary is open 0900-1900 Tuesday-Friday, 0900-1800 Saturday, and 1000-1700 Sunday. It is located at the corner of Ruf Avenue and Division Road.



THE THRIFT SHOP (334-255-9595) The Thrift Shop is located at the corner of Red Cloud & Ruf Ave in the old Armed Forces Bank building. We are open Wed - Fri, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Consignments are accepted Wed and Thurs from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All profits are donated back to the community in grants and scholarships.



NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE (GRAY AREA) RETIREMENT APPLICATION PROCESS

If they are still around, you may have reached out to your old unit and spoke with the Unit Administrator (UA) about the application process to start collecting your National Guard or Reserve retirement pay. If so, you found out the days when Human Resources Command (HRC) contacted you by mailing out a packet to start your retirement pay at age 60 (or earlier if you are eligible for an "Early Drop") are passed. The Reserve Component Retirements Branch at HRC processes retirement applications for all U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard members that are eligible for retirement pay at age 60 or earlier due to the NDAA 2008, Reduced Retirement Age. Retired pay applications should be submitted 9 months, but not less than 90 days, prior to 60th birthday to ensure all documents are received and processed correctly to Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Cleveland. This will also help in ensuring retired pay is received in a timely matter. Find the Retirement Application and Data for Payment of Retired Personnel (DD Form 2656) links at the website below. Follow the Check List and complete forms, DD Form 108 and DD Form 2656 and Bank. Everything you need during the application process is found at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Gray%20Area%20Retirements%20Branch>.

Submit application and all supporting documents to:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND
ATTN: AHRC PDP TR
1600 SPEARHEAD DIVISION AVENUE DEPT 482
FT KNOX KY 40122

Email: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-retirement-application-request@mail.mil

Fax Number: 502-613-4524

*****Keep a copy of everything for your records*****



Information at Your Fingertips on the Web:

(Click or Copy Link)

Army Retirement Services
www.soldierforlife.army.mil/

DFAS-Cleveland (Retired Pay & Annuitant Pay)
www.dfas.mil

Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC)
[CRSC \(Combat-Related Special Compensation\)](http://www.crsccompensation.com)
([army.mil](http://www.army.mil))

U.S. Army Main Page
www.army.mil

Veterans Administration
www.va.gov

Burial & Memorial Benefits
www.cem.va.gov

DOD Military Health Care System (TRICARE)
www.tricare.mil

Federal Employee Dental Vision Insurance Plan
www.benefeds.com

Express Scripts (Mail Order Pharmacy)
www.express-scripts.com

Federal Long Term Care Insurance
www.ltcfed.com

Medicare
www.medicare.gov

Social Security
www.ssa.gov

Military Personnel Records Request
www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

Army & Air Force Exchange Service
www.aafes.com

RAPIDS Site Locator (DEERS Enrollment & ID Card Facilities)
www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl

Military OneSource
www.militaryonesource.mil

Army Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
www.sfl-tap.army.mil (formerly ACAP)

Military Living Publications
(Includes Space-A Travel Information)
www.militaryliving.com

U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC)
www.hrc.army.mil

Air Force Afterburner

www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Afterburner/

Coast Guard "The Long Blue Line"

<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Director-of-Military-Personnel-CG-13/Retiree-Services-Program/Newsletters/>

Marine Corps "Semper Fidelis"

<https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/Manpower-Reserve-Affairs-MMSR-6/> See available issues at the bottom of the page

Navy Shift Colors

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Media-Center/Publications/Shift-Colors/>