

Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council
Minutes
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755
March 8, 2014

The one hundred and thirty first (131) meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at 2234 Huber Road, 3rd floor Conference Room, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland at 9:15 a.m., Mar 8, 2014, in accordance with AR 600-8-7, this report of the meeting is submitted:

The following members were present:

MG Roderick J. Isler, USA Ret (Chairman)

CSM Sandra A. Matlock-Williams USA Ret (Co-Chairman)

COL Bert L. Rice, USA Ret

COL Jean Simmons, USA Ret

COL Edward Uemura, USA Ret

SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret

SGM Jim Gilbert, USA Ret

MSG Barbara Barron, USA Ret

SSG Walter Hollman, USA Ret

Mrs. Catherine Eckford

Mrs. Missy Duncan

Mr. Richard Gillman

Mr. Eugene Johnson

Mr. Frank Macias, Commissary

Ms. Anna Taylor, RSO

MG Isler called the meeting to order with a welcome to all. COL Rice rendered the invocation and MG Isler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Exchange

The main store manager, Rita Powell discussed the ongoing construction and timelines for the AAFES stores on Ft. Meade. The 32 Express (convenience store/gas station) will open between 20 Mar and the end of the month. Once it opens the Trading Post will close down the next day. Arby's (inside the store) will open at the same time.

The Main Exchange construction is going well with a projected opening of mid-August. The concessions include: Domino's Pizza, Denny Express, Starbucks, and Boston Market. The Exchange will also offer: Paul Mitchell Salon, Refill Pharmacy, GNC, Game Stop, and a Gun Shop.

Once the exchange is opened, the old building will be demolished for the new parking lot with a anticipated completion date of November 2014.

Concerns were expressed about the traffic on Mapes road in front of 32 Express and students crossing the road to get to it. The concern was acknowledged, the installation will install a crosswalk and caution light. The date of installation was not known at the time.

Commissary

Frank Macias, Commissary manager, discussed the results of the FY2013 audit on DeCa, in which they received a clean audit. This is the 12th straight year that it has happened. The agency generated \$6 billion in sales and received 1.4 billion in appropriated funding. The commissary will continue to operate with changes in FY2015 that may include a 20% price increase.

He discussed the Commissary reward card, which will additional savings in the commissaries. Applicants have to register online at www.commissaries.com. Coupons can stored on the rewards card and automatically deducted when checking out.

KACC

COL Simmons, provided that the Health Benefit Advisors (HBA's) are still at Kimbrough. They will answer questions concerning bills. Tricare is also working to recapture patients that live within 30 miles of their facilities. This includes both active duty military and retirees age 65 or younger.

Relayhealth.com is a website that allows connectivity between patients and doctors. It allow for 24 hour response and lets patients stay in touch with the providers. Relay health is a password protected website and it allows users to look up information needed for themselves.

KACC leaders are changing. The Commander, CSM, DCN and Deputy Clinical Services are changing.

KACC has the Patient Advisory Council which meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. They are seeking more members.

RSO

Anna Taylor, RSO, discussed the dates for the upcoming Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD). She explained that October is the start of the new fiscal year and after the challenges of FY2014; it is recommended that a Friday in September be selected. It will serve the retiree community and installation better. The council selected 26 Sep 14 for the RAD as its preference.

She mentioned web-site scams and asked members to remember that any official Army websites will end in .mil (dot mil) not .org or .com (dot org or dot com).

Army Emergency Relief (AER) was addressed. It is not only for emergency relief. AER also offers no-interest loans, grants etc. It will also provide immediate support to families.

Effective 1 Apr 14, walk in services at Tricare Service Centers will no longer be available. Questions can be answered about plans. There is also discussion ongoing in Congress about charging fees for Tricare for Life.

Ms Taylor played a tribute to MAJ (USA Ret) Edward Calhoun Sr., a member of the retiree council, who passed on 22 Jan 14.

Old Business:

The Survivor Benefits Symposium was discussed at length. COL Burtnick is the lead on the symposium. The tentative date of the event was 7 June 14. However, it was recommended that the Symposium take place in the afternoon of the RAD. It is a good fit with the RAD. The primary audience will attend the RAD. It will fill the afternoon with beneficial information. It will garner more support because of the day of the event. The council agreed that it was a good ideal and will adjust the date and time to coincide with the symposium.

The following organizations from the command and community that council members will request support from are:

The Command Group

Legal services

KACC

VA

USFHS

Social Security

Medicare

To generate interest in the symposium, it was suggest at we get PAO support to help get the word out. Other options included use of the installation Marque, Maryland Gazette and announce in the retiree newsletter.

New Business

Discussion took place on how to increase of membership of the retiree council. Marketing efforts were discussed such as:

- Making a flyer and placing them in highly trafficked locations.

- Staffing a table at the RAD
- Current members will be sent a note as to their status.
- Ask PAO to do a story of the council place on Ft. Meade webpage
- Participate in monthly retirement briefings which are the 2d Thursday monthly
- Everyone become ambassadors for council
- Brief other organizations on the Council

Results of the current membership status will be discussed at the next meeting, 7 Jun 14.

Good of the Order

VA Clinic is operational and located behind KACC. To gain access a Veteran Health ID Card (VHIC) will be required. Cards will be issued to veterans with service connected disabilities. Using the veteran's clinic had no impact on a service members Tricare/Johns Hopkins Plans.

Gifts can be made to the Army and particular emergencies that take place and military families need support. There was a fire that displaced 5 military families. Financial support can be made for them and others through <http://giftstoarmy.army.mil/soldiersfamilies.aspx>. Visit the web site and learn more.

MG Isler adjourned the meeting at 10:45.