

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The ninetieth second meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m. on 5 June 2004. In accordance with AR 600-8-7, this report of the meeting is submitted:

a. The following members were present:

COL Bert L. Rice, USA Ret (Chairman)
SGM Kenneth L. McCall Sr., USA Ret (Co-Chairman)
COL Charles M. Shadle, USA Ret (Aberdeen)
COL Edward H, Uemura, USA Ret
COL(Dr.) Edwin L. Zemo, USAR Ret
LTC Louis F. Schneider, USA Ret
LtCDR Sam L. Bridwell, USN Ret (Western MD)
MAJ Edward Calhoun, Sr., USA Ret
CPT Arthur N. Rogers III, USA Ret
CW2 Ricky Godbolt, USA Ret
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret
SGM James Gilbert, USA Ret
SFC Carlo DePorto, USA Ret
SSG Walter B. Hollman, Sr., USA Ret
MRS. Catherine Eckford
MRS. Cecille Morse

2. The meeting was called to order with a welcome from COL Rice and the invocation being given by SFC DePorto followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance led by COL Shadle.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

COL Rice reviewed the minutes of the ninety-first meeting (13 Mar 04) that was accepted on a motion and approved by the council members in attendance. COL Rice also reported that the installation hosted injured, ill and wounded soldiers from the war at the golf course club house with a lunch and special activities. The soldiers were all in good spirits and had a positive attitude relative to their physical condition and their future. COL Rice introduced the following guests:

a. Ms Lisa Rhodes, staff writer for SOUND OFF, the installation's newsletter and remarked on the outstanding job that she is doing with presenting the personal profiles of those military retirees that are "Still Serving" and active in both their military and civilian communities. It was also noted that Ms Rhodes has been a tremendous asset to the council's efforts to

provide articles of interest to the community that are published in the SOUNDOFF.

- b. J. Patrick Ribble, recently assigned sales and merchandise manager for the Fort Meade AFFES main store. He remarked on his background, assignments and the renovations and promotions that are scheduled for the exchange. He fielded questions with responses to the following:

- (1) COL Zemo - Will more "big and tall" clothing be offered? (Yes, but a time-line has not been announced.)
- (2) CPT Rogers - There are few books from the New York Times bestseller list carried in the exchange. (This will improve with more of the "Top 10" being featured.)
- (3) COL Uemura - A problem exists with the exchange selling fertilizer that is wet. (A shed is being built to protect items of that nature from the weather.)
- (4) Mrs. Eckford - Is the exchange planning to carry "back-up generators" to provide emergency power for residential use? (It has not been identified as an item of interest, but it will be explored.)
- (5) SGM Gilbert - Is there a possibility of the exchange upgrading many of the products that they currently stock? (There is a continuous review and suggestions are always addressed and welcomed.)
- (6) COL Rice - Expressed a concern relative to their recent placement of the "film drop-off" stand. (The exchange will monitor its usage and comments prior to relocating it.) They both addressed the need for a "car wash" issue.
- (7) SGM Funk - Will the exchange carry American flags that can be mounted on vehicles? (They were stocked in the past and the issue will be re-visited.)

NOTE: The concessions do carry them.

- c. SGM Funk was asked to introduce Paul Rhodes, the new commissary officer. Mr. Rhodes remarked on his previous assignment to Fort Meade and the he transferred here from Bolling AFB in November 2003. He shared with the Council the improvements he initiated while at Bolling and brings that same vision to Fort Meade. He told of the improvements that he wants to make and of those that have been implemented. He stated that the customers

have to be his "eyes and ears" sharing with him their concerns - both the positive and the negative. He reported on the case lot sales and other promotions that will coincide with our Retiree Appreciation Day weekend. As an aside, he stated that sales at the Fort Meade Commissary are the third largest on the east coast and sixth largest in the world. The "Savings You've Earned" program was also discussed. Mr. Rhodes responded to the following questions:

- (1) COL Uemura - Expressed a concern relative to cashiers having to leave their registers in order to resolve pricing conflicts that holds up the line. (This problem has been identified with pricing and scanning upgrades being addressed.)
- (2) SGM Gilbert - Remarked on Mr. Young's performance and his being an asset and an integral part of the successes that the commissary has enjoyed. (Mr. Rhodes acknowledged Mr. Young's many contributions.)
- (3) CPT Rogers - remarked on the commissary's gift certificates program.

Mr. Rhodes addressed a concern relative to how vendor-stocking problems affect sales and that reliable people are needed to fill these positions and solicited the Council's help in recruiting people for it.

4. RSO REMARKS: Mr. Ashley reported on the following:
 - a. COL Shadle and SFC DePorto being veterans of World War II and were participants in the D-Day assault. CPT Rogers informed all that COL Wolf, council member, participated in the D-Day landing as well and provided a newspaper article that reported it and how a recent injury that prevented him from attending today's meeting, also prevented him from attending local ceremonies.
 - b. That the Installation Commander's Certificates of Appreciation and volunteer pins were presented to each council member for their service.
 - c. The deadline for the retiree newsletter and that information on Retiree Appreciation Day events and activities would be included in it.
 - d. That plans for the RAD are on track and remarked.
 - (1) Friday, 10 September 2004, Sit-Down Dinner will be served at Club Meade (cost for dinner - \$13.00). Attendees are being asked to be seated by 6p.m. so that they may be honored with a special musical presentation.

- (2) Saturday, 11 September 2004, buffet luncheon will be served at Club Meade (cost - \$12.00). Prior to this the exhibits and health screening will take place at McGill Training Center starting at 8 a.m. At 11 a.m. Mr. Tom Pamperin, Assistant Director, Policy, Compensation and Pension Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, is scheduled to be our guest speaker.
- (3) Council members were asked to help obtain door prizes that would be given away during the weekend event.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. COL Uemura provided a corrected update on the remarks that he made at the 13 March Meeting. He had stated that while traveling he had forgotten to pack some of his medication and because a pharmacy in his area of travel was able to provide him with the medication, he thought that this might have been standard policy. He has since learned that it is not and that the service that he had received is not available at all pharmacies.
- b. Mrs. Morse addressed some concerns surrounding Tricare for Life. Prime medical care and some of the differences between them.
- c. SGM McCall reported that many of the bills introduced during the recent State of Maryland's legislative session that would have affected retirees and veterans positively, were not adopted including the state income tax exemption for retired military pay.
- d. SGM Funk remarked on the need to have the SOUND OFF newspaper sent to military retirees in order for them to have access to information of interest to them as well as the council members, available to them in a timely manner. An effort will be made to have copies available to the council, but funding is not available to reach all military retirees.
- e. Courtesy to the National Flag. Mr. Ashley provided copies of the Federal Flag Code to all. COL Zemo continued to have concerns relative to enforcement of the code issues and it was the consensus that it would be difficult to do so.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council Report. At its recent meeting, of the 39 issues reviewed by the CoS Council, the two (2) submitted by the Fort Meade Retiree Council were addressed:

- (1) Limitation of Military Clothing Sales Store items to Retirees. The restriction that pertained to the purchase of Army PT clothing by retirees is being removed by the Army Chief of Staff and will change in the regulation so that retirees may purchase these items in the future. This is not in effect yet.
 - (2) Requirement to add Social Security Numbers to checks at MWR activities. This requirement gives rise to concerns relative to identity theft. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) has formed a task force to study this and related issues. Additionally, options to this practice by MWR are being considered.
 - b. Surviving Spouse Seminar. COL Rice reported that one should be planned for 2005. Mrs. Morse and others will coordinate it.
7. APG UPDATE: COL Shadle reported on the following:
- a. Their Retiree Appreciation Day is now scheduled for 14 November 2004 and the activities that are planned.
 - b. The new Installation Commander is COL Wright.
 - c. The problems resulting from the A-76 study and their many negative effects.
 - d. The concerns relative to the Survivors Benefit Plan as it pertains to the payout reduction from 55% to 35% because of age and other factors. He provided a handout that addressed program reform issues.
8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: LtCDR Bridwell reported on the following:
- a. The upcoming visit of President Bush to Carlisle Barracks.
 - b. That the Retirement Services Officer position survived the A-76 study, but because of its effect on other positions, increases in the workload have resulted.
 - c. The outstanding work that many organizations that are advocates for the hearing impaired are doing and discussed the services that he has received.
9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL: COL Uemura reported on the following:
- a. The pharmacy at the clinic has adopted a "Close on Saturdays" policy.
 - b. That the policy being enforced relative to medical records possession by the Medical Treatment Facility has

created some problems for many in that when they show for appointments, their records did not precede them resulting in new appointments having to be made and medical treatment being postponed. The problem is being addressed.

- c. Those that travel frequently and who require constant prescribed medication, should carry a copy of their prescriptions with them in order to have them replenished in the event the medication is lost or runs out.

9. CO-CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: SGM McCall remarked on the following:

- a. His attendance at a recent meeting of the Maryland Veteran's Commission on which he sits as a Commissioner and the issues of interest to military retirees that were discussed. This included Maryland's commemoration of the 60th anniversary of D-Day and their efforts to recognize surviving participants, Federal Senate bills co-signed by Senator Barbara Mikulski (SB-19 and SB-50); Senator Mikulski's opposition to the recent policy implemented by the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs which requires certain categories of Veterans to co-pay for medical services received. Also discussed, was the appointment of Maryland State Delegate George W. Owings III as the new Maryland State Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.
- b. The Federal rule that allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide a government grave marker for eligible veterans buried in a private cemetery and applies to deaths occurring on or after 11 September 2001.
- c. Reiterated the need for Council members to try and obtain gifts to be used as door prizes for the RAD event.
- d. At the council's next meeting, final arrangements for the RAD will be addressed.

11. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST:

- a. SGM Gilbert informed the Council of the Flag Day breakfast being held at Club Meade on 14 June 2004.
- b. Mrs. Morse reported that since the Community Action Council activities are now under the Army Family Advisory Boards jurisdiction, representatives for that activity would be selected at the next AFAP meeting.

c. SGM McCall thanked all for their support and contributions to the council as together we work in the best interest of retired and active duty military.

12. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. with the next meeting scheduled for 9 a.m., Saturday, 28 August 2004, at 2234 Huber Road, Fort Meade.

BERT L. RICE
COL, USA Ret
Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council

KENNETH L. MCCALL, SR.
SGM, USA Ret
Co-Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council