

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The one hundred and fourth (104) meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at building 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m. on 2 June 2007. 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 Erwin Burtnick, USA Ret
COL Edward H, Uemura, USA Ret
MAJ William S. Heath, USA Ret
CSM Sandra Matlock-Williams, USA Ret
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret
SGM James Gilbert, USA Ret
MSG Barbara Barron, USA Ret
SFC Carlo Deporto, USA Ret
MSgt Charles E. Plummer, USAF Ret
Mrs Catherine Eckford
Mrs. Cecille Morse

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

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: COL Rice reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2007, which were unanimously accepted by the Council. COL Rice then introduced the following guests:

a. COL Kenneth O. McCreedy, Installation Commander, who remarked on the following:

(1) Fort Meade's second place win in the Army Community of Excellence competition which was recently held and for which it received a \$1,000,000.00 award. Various aspects of the competitions categories were discussed. The entire community, which included military retirees, were thanked for their contributions. Placing second allows the installation to compete again next year. A website was established to allow the community to post ideas as to how the award money should be spent. A number of excellent ones have been received to date.

(2) BRAC quarterly meeting held recently served as an orientation tour and sneak peek for those organizations relocating to Fort Meade. (SGM McCall inquired about the recent building dedication at Fort Meade that will serve tele-commuters. COL McCreedy stated that it is for DISA personnel who are coordinating the BRAC activity relocation program.)

Comments were also made relative to a road improvement and traffic study, an environmental impact study, business and lease plan strategy, all essential elements of the growth and development associated with BRAC at Fort Meade.

(3) Fourth of July activities planned for Fort Meade which will open the post for public participation. Some of the events were highlighted that included a USO mobile canteen exhibit and a fireworks display sponsored by the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company.

(4) Oktoberfest, 21 - 23 September 2007, will be a 3-day event here at Fort Meade. Information relative to the same will be published in the coming weeks.

(5) His gratitude was extended to the council for their contributions and support that they provide. They remain an integral part of the installation.

(6) At the 3 March meeting of the council, COL Rice reported on the US Army Retired lapel pins that were distributed by the Department of the Army to all Army retirees. MSGT Plummer, an Air Force retiree, jokingly, took exception to the fact that he had not received one. COL McCreeedy took this opportunity to present MSGT Plummer with an Army Retiree lapel pin for which he indicated his appreciation.

NOTE: COL McCreeedy could not field questions due to another commitment that he had to attend.

b. Leo Bitner, General Manager, AAFES, expressed his appreciation for the role the council and the military retiree community plays in the successes enjoyed by the system. He also introduced Vincent A. James, the new Fort Meade Main Store manager who transferred in from Maxwell AFB. They distributed gift bags to all and Mr. Bitner addressed the following:

(1) AAFES Fort Meade, returned \$1,000,000.00 to the local MWR activity which was based on the volume of sales that they experienced.

(2) Popeyes restaurant - both funding and permission to proceed has been received. Construction is scheduled to start in September 2007 with a targeted opening date of February 2008.

(3) Car Wash facility - funding and approval to proceed has also been received for this project. Construction is scheduled to start in September 2007, and should be operational by May 2008.

(4) Main store air conditioning - because of mechanical failures, a new system had to be installed and apologies for the inconvenience and suffering endured by its customers and employees were issued.

(5) Burger King promotion - this is tied to credit card usage when making a purchase at the on-post restaurant which allows the participant to receive every 10th meal free.

(6) "Still Serving Sale" - planned for 28 - 30 September 2007. The PX and Commissary will co-sponsor the event.

(a) Mr. James remarked on the following:

Christmas in July Sale that will be held on 13 and 14 July 2007.

Sales has increased by 8%.

Star Card punchcard promotion is being held during June 2007.

(7) Questions and Answers:

(a) MSGT Plummer - pricing of fuel at the on-post service stations. (Determined by regulations and local surveys by brand and grade. The average price is then applied by grade.)

(b) SGM Gilbert - remarked about the slow service at the Robin Hood eatery especially during peak hours of operation. (Management is aware of the problem and corrective action is being taken.)

© SFC Deporto - smaller male shirt sizes are not always available. (Aware of concern and problem is being addressed.)

(d) CSM Matlock-Williams and purchasing of a dish washer - went to PX and found that they were on sale and had not been advertised on the Buddy List e-mail site. (Apologies offered for the oversight. They try to ensure that information posted is current and correct.)

(e) SGM McCall thanked the PX for their price matching program which has been well received by all customers. Additionally, all cashiers appear to be knowledgeable as well.

c. Walter Young, Fort Meade Commissary Manager, offered his thanks and appreciation for the support rendered by the council and military retirees. He reported on the following:

(1) Ms. Sannino, Commissary Officer, could not attend. She was away on business relative to the recent death of her husband. (The council offered its condolences.)

(2) Sales up 7.83% and the recent truckload sale exceeded \$138,000.00 in sales.

(3) DECA East Region rated the Fort Meade commissary #2 behind Fort Belvoir. However, worldwide, Fort Meade is #4 with sales exceeding \$6,100,000.00. (This was made possible by retiree support.)

(4) The reshelving project was completed and DECA will be doing same worldwide. Various rationales were given for the

adjustments that were made. SGM Gilbert asked if new scanning equipment would be brought in? (Yes, due in September 2007.)

(5) A remark was made that more handicapped parking spaces were needed. (This is being studied.)

(6) A gift item was donated by the commissary for use as a door prize.

Note: SGM McCall remarked on a statement previously made by Mr. Young in which he stated that he does all of his grocery shopping at the commissary. SGM McCall saw him in the Giant store, Shoppers and other like stores, but instead of pushing a grocery cart, he had a clip board, paper and pencil doing price comparisons.

d. COL Bernard Cullen, USA Ret., Director of Human Resources, had no comment.

4. RSO REMARKS: Mr. Ashley reported on the following:

a. Retiree Appreciation Day - 26 October 2007:

(1) All activities will take place in the morning at the Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center (KACC), The facilities were offered by COL Cummings and her staff.

(2) The New Freedom Inn (dining facility) will be available for lunch and bus transportation will be provided to and from KACC.

(3) The afternoon program will take place at the Post Theater where the featured speaker will be COL John W. Radke, USA Ret, Chief, Army Retirement Services, HQDA, followed by a panel discussion.

(4) Door prizes will be distributed.

(5) Letters have been sent inviting the various service organizations to participate.

(6) Golf carts will, hopefully, once again be made available to transport attendees from distant parking areas.

b. Information/articles for the July 2007 newsletter must be received not later than 8 June 2007.

NOTES: COL Rice remarked on a letter received from SGM Raymond Moran, USA Retired, in which he forwarded a request from Mrs. Lisa Beilke, to have included in remarks made during the RAD speakers presentation, comments made by LTG Rochelle, Army G-1 at the dedication ceremony of the Human Resources Center to Max Beilke, that alluded to the final contributions made by Beilke to the military retirees. (This is to be taken under advisement.)

c. The website available from which information can be obtained on prior military service members and ones ancestors that may have been in the military.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Survivor Benefit Symposium. Mrs. Morse reported that the event is scheduled for 18 August 2007, at Club Meade, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch will be served at a cost of \$11.00 per person. Speakers are being contacted and SGM McCall stated that in order for a representative from the Maryland Department of VETERANS Affairs to attend to discuss burial in state veterans cemeteries, a letter requesting same must be submitted. COL Rice stated that he would submit same. (SGM McCall, CSM Matlock-Williams and MSG Barron will attend to provide assistance/support.) SGM McCall stated that he will acquire items for door prizes.

b. Sanitizing grocery cart handles - SGM McCall reported that the commissary has replaced its handi-wipe dispenser and is in operation.

6. NEW BUSINESS: COL Rice remarked on the following:

a. An article addressed in the May-August 2007 issue of Army Echoes relative to the Aid and Attendance Benefit. VA reported that this benefit is under-used and is directed at wartime veterans and surviving spouses of wartime veterans that provide for a special monthly benefit if qualified under this program. Certain income requirements must be met. For more information, call VA at 1-800-827-1000. (SGM McCall stated that he would be prepared to speak on this issue at the 18 August symposium if need be.)

b. COL Rice announced that registration for the Bone Marrow Donor program is scheduled for 30 June 2007 and ages 16 through 60 may participate.

c. The ground breaking ceremony for Fort Meade's Centennial Park located near the parade field had been conducted. Ceremonial bricks are still available for sale.

d. The upcoming Flag Day/Army Birthday celebration that will be held at Fort Meade.

e. COL Burtnick reported on his and SGM McCall's involvement with the Freedom Team Salute program. He explained same and accepted the names of those interested in receiving honors. (SGM McCall stated that a table will be manned at the RAD to register interested Army veterans.)

7. APG UPDATE: No report rendered, no representatives present.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: No report. LTC James A. Kesselring, USA Ret, was introduced by COL Rice as a possible replacement for LTCdr Bridwell.

9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL: COL Uemura reported on the following:

a. The open enrollment period being conducted for Tricare Prime patients. Those Tricare for Life patients now in the Kimbrough system will continue to be seen, but new patients will be directed to another health care provider which Kimbrough will help locate.

b. The community forum that KACC will conduct on 28 June 2007, at 6 p.m. An open invitation is extended.

c. Those participating in the Over-The-Counter (OTC) medication program will have eligibility for one year. Renewal must be obtained which requires attending a class at KACC.

9. ARMY FAMILY ADVISORY BOARD: No report.

11. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: SGM Funk reported that only one cart corral had been funded for the commissary, but more are being requested. Also, the parking area is to be relined (Striped). NOTE: Mrs. Eckford had nothing to add.

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

a. His appointment by Anne Arundel County (AAC) Executive John R. Leopold, to chair the newly created 13 member Anne Arundel County Veterans Affairs Commission and that COL Rice had spoken in favor of his nomination and the others, at the 16 April 2007 county council meeting.

b. The executive order signed by AAC Executive Leopold, that allows active and retired military, and their family members free entry into all county operated parks by showing a valid DOD Identification Card.

c. The attendance by he, COL Rice and COL Burtnick at Maryland Senators Barbara A. Mikulski's Veterans Advisory Board meeting on 31 May 2007 at which the following was addressed:

(1) The scheduled opening of VA healthcare facilities at Andrews Air Force Base and Fort Detrick that was announced by she and Maryland Senator Benjamin Cardin.

(2) Her commitment to her "Keeping Our Promises to America's Veterans" agenda which includes:

(a) Keeping medical care accessible and affordable.

(b) Fighting for veteran's healthcare needs.

(c) Guaranteeing better service to veterans.

(d) Enhancing veteran's and their families quality of life.

(e) Looking out for women veterans.

(3) Her fight to improve veterans burial benefits.

Note: Handouts relative to the aforementioned were distributed.

(4) BRAC briefing she attended at Fort Meade at which she called BRAC a tremendous opportunity for Maryland.

(5) Tribute paid to Maryland's 82 warriors that made the ultimate sacrifice for the war on terrorism.

d. The attendance of he and COL Burtnick at the 1 May 2007 meeting of the Maryland Veterans Commission where issues of concerns relative to Maryland's veterans were addressed that included in part:

(1) The failure to have passed by Maryland, the full tax exemption of military retired pay. (COL Rice and COL Burtnick added additional comments on this issue.)

(2) The veterans related laws that were passed.

(3) The formation in AAC of a Veterans Affairs Commission.

(4) The 18 August 2007, Survivor Benefit Symposium at Fort Meade.

(5) The 26 October 2007, Retiree Appreciation Day that will be held at Fort Meade.

(6) The lack of movement at the state level to erect the Maryland Women's Veteran Monument.

(7) The naming of James Adkins as the new Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs and Wilbur Forbes as his deputy.

e. Distributed copies of the spring 2007 issue of the Maryland Veteran newsletter.

f. Council meeting schedule:

Saturday, 29 September 2007 - Finalize plans for the 26 October RAD; develop a list of issues/concerns for the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council meeting.

Saturday, 1 December 2007 - Review 26 October RAD event; review list of issues/concerns for the Army C/S Retiree Council meeting.

Saturday, 1 March 2008 - Initiate planning for the 2008 RAD.

Saturday, 7 June 2008 - open.

13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

a. Mrs. Morse addressed the establishment of a bank account at Citizens National Bank, for the Retiree Council, to be used in support of events that require attendees to submit checks, etc. COL Rice identified Mrs. Morse, COL Uemura and CSM

Matlock-Williams as the accounts signature card signers with responsibilities to be identified by the bank.

b. Mr. Young conducted a door prize drawing for items donated by the PX and commissary.

14. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 am with a reminder that the next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Saturday, 9:00 a.m., 29 September 2007, 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