

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The one hundred and fifth (105) 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 29 September 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  
LTC James A. Kesselring, USA Ret (Western MD)  
MAJ Edward Calhoon, USA Ret  
MAJ William S. Heath, USA Ret  
CW2 Ricky C. Godbolt, USA Ret  
CSM Barry Decker, USA Ret (APG)  
CSM Sandra Matlock-Williams, USA Ret  
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret  
MSG Barbara Barron, USA Ret  
1SG Richard Gilliam, USA Ret  
SFC Carlo Deporto, USA Ret  
MSGt Charles E. Plummer, USAF Ret  
SFC James Wafer, USA Ret  
SSG Walter B. Hollman, USA 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 CW2 Godbolt.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: COL Rice distributed Certificates of Appreciation for Volunteers that were awarded to Council members by the Installation Commander (COL McCreedy) earlier this year. COL McCreedy presented them as pictures were taken of each recipient. COL McCreedy added his appreciation citing a "job well done" and that the Council serves not only the interest of military retirees and their families, but the active duty as well. COL Rice reviewed, with the Council, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2007, which were unanimously accepted. COL Rice then reported on the death of COL Charles Shadle, Chairman of the Aberdeen Proving Ground Retiree Council and asked all to remember his family in their prayers. (He had been ill for some time, but continued to "serve" and attend our

meetings in spite of same.) COL Rice then introduced the following guests:

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

(1) That he could not stay for the entire meeting because of his commitment to visit with the surviving members of the 70<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion that formed at Fort Meade in 1940 and were here for their reunion.

(2) The BRAC impact on Fort Meade and the funding that was approved for construction required to accommodate future operations.

(3) His Air Force and Navy counterparts that are partnering with him and the Habitat for Humanity organization in support of building several houses in Brooklyn Park, MD.

(4) The Enhanced Use Lease benefits program and the issues that he and the Anne Arundel County Executive have agreed to support in preparation for the BRAC impact.

(5) The initiative that supports the improvement of educational opportunities at Fort Meade when the Anne Arundel County School Board selected Meade High School to participate in the International Magnet program where they will offer a Homeland Security curriculum that takes advantage of the expertise offered by the intelligence community here at Fort Meade. CMSGT Orlanoff, a visitor and potential council member, asked if the Impact Aid program will help this initiative? (It would and that additional legislation is being introduced at the federal level that will provide more funding.)

(6) Questions, Answers and Comments:

(a) MSGT Plummer - How will BRAC and the influx of personnel affect post housing as it relates to the current policy of renting to military retirees and DoD civilians? (The primary target for the new housing is the military. Retirees and DoD civilians are offered the use of available housing on a month to month lease. As more troops begin to arrive, they will have priority in obtaining same, thereby reducing the number of units that can be leased by others. Ample notification will be provided when units must be vacated by retirees and DoD civilians.)

(b) SFC Wafer - One temporary lodging facility at Fort Meade is in deplorable condition. Are there plans to correct it? (Yes, and it is being accomplished in phases through a privatization and renovation program. Certain fixes are being made now, but this is a long term fix issue.) COL Rice added more comments to the response.

(7) Thanked all for their continued support and the degree of interest and vitality that the council brings to the installation.

b. Ms Barbara Sannino, Fort Meade Commissary Officer, who addressed the following:

(1) Thanked the retired community for the support that has been extremely vital to their success.

(2) The Reset program is now five (5) months old and has not added any new products, yet many thought they had. They currently carry over 21,000 line items.

(3) Holiday merchandise has been received. When the stock is depleted, it will not be replenished and suggested that purchases be made early.

(4) That "gift certificates" are available for purchase and use by authorized customers.

(5) That they are sponsoring a "cookie baking contest" at Fort Meade and that the entries will be donated to the USO and like organizations for distribution to the troops.

(6) The commissary is prohibited from donating gifts, but, vendors can. Letters requesting vendor support must be sent to her and she will process same. An extensive discussion relative to the policy followed.

(7) Because of several safety concerns, Handi-wipes used for disinfecting cart handles, will no longer be made available.

(8) Timely stocking of items are of a concern. Vendor stockers work for vendors, the others are commissary stockers. Problems are created when vendor stockers sometimes fail to replenish items when needed.

(9) Questions, Answers and Comments:

(a) MSGT Plummer - Who selects the merchandise that is carried in the store? (Defense Commissary Agency.)

(b) CSM Matlock-Williams - At a previous council meeting, it was reported that there would be a "change out" of the cash registers. What is the status of this initiative since it does have an impact on providing expeditious service? (The "change out" is on track and should be completed within the near future.) \*The markings on many of the "Handicapped" parking spaces are obliterated. Will they be re-marked since many unauthorized vehicles are being parked in those spaces? (Yes. We are waiting for the Post to begin the project.)

(c) COL McCreedy - Are there plans to return item limits to the Self-Checkout lane, since bottlenecks are created when customers bring cart loads of items to the register? (Not at this time because enforcement creates a problem that is not easily controlled.)

NOTE: Ms. Sannino conducted an impromptu survey asking attendees to select the number of items that should be allowed through the self-checkout lane (currently there are no limits). The responses ranged from 10 to 30 indicating the

complexity of the problem associated with the issue. They will continue to review.

(d) SGM McCall - Often while standing on line at the self-checkout lane he hears customers remarking about the long wait and he seizes the opportunity to remind them of the "early-bird" shopping hours where the wait is non-existent, and called upon others to do the same when customers complain about the wait.

(e) Mr. Frank Maccias, Ms Sannino's assistant - lights in the parking lot is scheduled for repairs within the next 30 days which addresses a concern that many had expressed.

c. Mr. Leo Bitner, General Manager, Fort Meade Consolidated Exchanges, who addressed the following:

(1) Expressed his thanks to the retiree community for their continued support which enables the AAFES to return a large portion of funds to the installation Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program.

(2) The construction of Popeyes Restaurant is being reassessed based on a recent study of food opportunities associated with BRAC. The emphasis will be placed on siting a Subway's first and maybe a Popeyes later.

(3) Fuel dispensing has been curtailed at the post's car care facility because of insufficient funding to maintain its operation. Discussion relative to its re-opening had been held that included privatization, but a decision had not been reached.

(4) Construction on the car wash facility is progressing.

(5) Holiday sales has commenced and suggested enrolling in the Buddy List (e-mail) program because of the numerous discount opportunities that it offers.

(6) A new Laundromat has opened on post that houses state of the art equipment.

(7) October sales will focus on fire safety with fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, etc., being placed on sale. The fire department will conduct demonstrations at the PX parking lot.

(8) Questions, Answers and Comments:

(a) Mrs. Morse - How is pricing of fuel sold on post determined, when some brands sold off post are less expensive? (A new test policy is in effect that allows the sale of fuel at a low cost as long as it is not below the cost for purchase of same. A survey is still taken of local gas stations, but using the average of three (3) prices is not in effect during the test period.) An extensive discussion on the pros and cons of the test pricing policy followed.

(b) SFC DePorto - Expressed concerns relative to the length of time (over two weeks) it took to have his car repaired at the Car Care Center. (recent retirements has reduced the number of mechanics to one and efforts are underway to recruit/hire more. The competition for qualified mechanics is great.)

(c) CW2 Godbolt - The fuel sold at APG is competitive with the local market. A large screen TV that he recently purchased through AAFES was found to be \$900.00 below the competitions price and the service that the delivery people provided was outstanding.

NOTE - Mr. Bitner distributed gift bags at the conclusion of his presentation.

d. COL Bernard Cullen, USA Ret., Director of Human Resources, had the following remarks:

(1) Waiting times for ID cards is lengthy because of the time it takes to process recipients of the DoD Access ID cards. Military retirees and family members are affected the most. He took a poll of attendees to ascertain those that favored an appointment system (on-line or call-in) versus "waiting on line" at the ID card section. (A consensus was not reached.)

(2) The building that houses the Human Resources Center, when it was initially built, was the installation's Cooks and Bakers School. A stove of the vintage used during that era has been located, is being refurbished and will be placed on display in the building.

e. New / Perspective members:

(1) SFC Robert Caswell, USA Ret., was recently appointed to the council.

(2) CMSGT Mark H. Olanoff, USAF Ret., was introduced as a perspective member of the council and agreed to serve.

NOTE: Both are extremely active in veteran service organizations and military retired organizations.

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

a. The coordination meeting he had with Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center (KACC) staff relative to the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) scheduled for 26 October 2007 that included:

(1) The various stations that will be established.

(2) The availability of flu immunizations and may require individuals shot records be with them.

(3) The placement of directional signs throughout the installation guiding them to KACC.

(4) The availability of parking and the use of golf carts to transport attendees from distant areas of the parking area.

(5) The designated entry point to RAD activities is the main entrance (cul-de-sac) at KACC flag pole area.

(6) The listing of organizations that will man booths.

(7) The need for Retiree Council representatives to man the "Sign-in" table and distribute door prize tickets. Also guides and golf cart drivers are needed. (SGM McCall will coordinate this task.)

(8) The availability of buses to transport attendees to and from the Freedom Inn dining facility.

(9) The re-convening of the program at the Post Theater (1:30 p.m.), discussion and door prize drawings. After, the Fort Meade Museum will be open for a tour.

b. Permission was granted to fill the vacancy that currently exists within the RSO staff.

c. Distribution of the Retiree Council roster. (SGM McCall requested all to check it to ensure listed information is correct and current.)

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Mrs. Morse reported on the success of the Survivor Benefit Symposium. Attending were 145 guests and speakers.

b. A Retiree Information Account Fund was established with the Citizen National Bank for depositing checks from those attending Retiree functions for which a fee must be paid.

6. NEW BUSINESS: None.

7. APG UPDATE: CSM Decker reported on the following:

a. Additional comments on the passing of COL Shadle and that efforts are underway to find a replacement for him.

b. Their RAD is scheduled for 20 October 2007 that will follow the same format as in previous years. The guest speaker will be James Adkins, BG (USA Ret), Maryland State Secretary of Veteran Affairs. Lunch is to be served in their dining facility and the installation's Army Band will provide musical entertainment.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: LTC Kesselring distributed two (2) handouts that he had received while attending a board meeting of the MD State Governor's Workforce Investment Board held at the Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, MD. Topics of discussion included the recruitment of veterans as employees and an overview of BRAC's impact on Maryland and the preparations being made to accommodate its implementation.

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

a. The renovations at the KACC that has necessitated the relocation of several activities/offices.

- b. The MRI unit that is in use at the facility.
- c. COL Laurie Cummings, Commander, KACC, and the briefing she conducted that included the importance of obtaining mammograms.
- d. SFC DePorto remarked that he was given a new primary care physician and was not informed of the change in advance. Deployments and reassignments of assets will affect personnel availability.)

9. ARMY FAMILY ADVISORY BOARD: No report.

11. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: Following the report rendered by Ms Sannino, neither SGM Funk nor Mrs. Eckford had anything to add.

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

- a. The handouts that he provided that pertained to:
  - (1) TRICARE For Life Coverage.
  - (2) TRICARE Survivor Benefits.
  - (3) News article announcing the combined efforts of the Combat-Related Special Compensation Division and the Traumatic Service members' Group Life Insurance that will ensure that those eligible receive their benefits.
  - (4) News article reporting on the need for those desiring to be buried in their military uniform, plan now to ensure that their survivors have access to medals, proper accoutrements, uniform accessories that will adorn same.
  - (5) News article stating that Veterans have a responsibility to appeal dubious decisions denying their VA claims. Many veteran service organizations and state departments of veteran's affairs, stand ready to provide assistance. (COL Burtnick remarked on the quality of the assistance provided for appeals by the MD Department of Veterans Affairs.) (SSG Hollman stated that when you go to the VA to receive a claim related medical examination and they ask you how you feel, never say: "OK or fine" because it may have a negative bearing on their findings.)
  - (6) A flyer announcing that military personnel in civilian clothes and veterans may now render the hand salute when paying honors to the US Flag, in lieu of placing their right hand over their heart.
  - (7) A document from the American Veterans Institute that reported on a program that may allow qualified persons to receive improved benefits by meeting the established income and net worth criteria. A surviving spouse may also be eligible for this benefit.

NOTE: SGM McCall reminded all to share the aforementioned information with the members of their various organizations.

b. For the RAD on 26 October:

(1) Requested those volunteers that will assist in the day's activity report to KACC by 7:30 a.m., for a briefing.

Sign-In Table - COL Uemura, MSG Barron, SFC DePorto.  
Golf Cart Operators - CSM Matlock-Williams, SFC  
Wafer.

Guides - SGM Funk, Mrs. Morse.

(2) Those donating gifts for door prizes, may bring them to the KAC on 26 October or to Mr. Ashley at the RSO prior to. (SSG Hollman delivered several bags of his famous peanuts that are being secured in the vault in Mr. Ashley's office.)

c. Council meeting schedule:

Saturday, 1 December 2007 - Review 2007 RAD event;  
review list of issues/concerns for the Army Chief of Staff's  
Retiree Council meeting.

Saturday, 1 or 8 March 2008 - Address the need for more  
Council members to participate in installation events.

Saturday, 7 June 2008 - open.

Saturday, 27 September 2008 - 13 September 2008

Friday, 3 or 17 October 2008 - RAD

Saturday, 6 December 2008 - Tentative.

### 13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

a. COL Rice remarked on the following:

(1) The "catch 66" issue associated with retirement planning that includes the mixing of retirement pays and the failure of persons to buy back time. (Many were familiar with this concern.)

(2) The Veterans Day ceremony at Fort Meade planned for 8 November 2007, at the Fort Meade Museum.

b. SGM McCall remarked on the following:

(1) The recognition of Sunday, 30 September 2007, being Gold Star Mothers Day, by President George W. Bush through his signing of a proclamation for same. Those attending worship services should take the opportunity to address this honor.

(2) The Veterans Day ceremony being held at Crownsville Veterans Cemetery in Anne Arundel County on Sunday, 11 November 2007, at 11 a.m. The United Veterans of AA County are hosting this event.

c. CSM Matlock-Williams reported on an event being held in Washington, DC at the Women in Service Memorial.

d. SFC Caswell remarked on the event being held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on 10 November 2007, in Washington, DC.

e. MSG Barron suggested that for our 1 December meeting, attendees bring cookies for donating to the Army Community Services at Fort Meade, for distribution as needed. (SGM McCall asked that toys and other gifts can also be brought for donation to the ACS.) MSG Barron has been identified as the coordinator for this effort.

f. Mr. Bitner conducted a door prize drawing for items donated by AAFES.

14. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. with a reminder that the next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Saturday, 9:00 a.m., 1 December, 2007 at Building 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