

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The one hundred and seventh (107) 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 8 March 2008. 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 Edward W. Uemura, USA Ret
LTC Jeanette Hammond, USA Ret
MAJ Edward J. Calhoun, USA Ret
MAJ William S. Heath, USA Ret
CSM Sandra Matlock-Williams, USA Ret
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret
MSG Barbara Barron, USA Ret
SFC Robert Caswell, USA Ret
SFC Carlo Deporto, USA Ret
MSGt Charles E. Plummer, USAF Ret
SSG Walter B. Hollman, USA Ret
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 SGM McCall.

NOTE: The announcement of former long term council member COL (USA Ret) Edwin J. Wolf's death was made and a copy of the newspaper obituary was distributed. He was 100 years old.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: COL Rice reviewed with the council, the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2007. The minutes were corrected to reflect that CSM Matlock-Williams was not in attendance. The minutes were unanimously approved. COL Rice made the following introductions:

a. Perspective Council members:

CW3 Gregory Crites, USN Ret and 1SG Eugene Johnson, USA Ret. Both provided information relative to their military service and presented reasons for wanting to join the Council. CW3 Crites was advised of his honorary status with the council because he was retired Navy and the council is regulated under Army regulations. Both were given bio-sketch forms to complete and return to SGM McCall.

b. Mr. Frank Macias, Fort Meade Commissary, who remarked on the following:

(1) The transfer of Commissary Officer, Ms Barbara Sannino, to a facility in New Jersey and the pending arrival of her replacement, a Ms Williams.

(2) The store receiving a top rating based on its sales that exceeded \$21.4 million and attributed its success to the support from the military retiree community.

(3) The CART system upgrades / testing have been completed and implemented which will result in improved service to store customers.

(4) The upcoming case lot sale and frozen food sale.

(5) The stores sushi bar was rated in DECA's top ten.

(6) Re-stripping of the parking lot has been scheduled.

(7) Customer complaints of the non-availability of turkey-bacon. This is a logistics issue which is being addressed.

(8) Questions, answers and comments:

(a) MSG Barron, a commissary bagger, stated that more racks were needed for bags. (This is being addressed.)

(b) SFC DePorto remarked on the aisles being cluttered. (The placement of products does not interfere with the traffic flow. SGM McCall also noted that aisle clearance (Width) complies with safety standards.)

(c) MSgt Plummer stated that product stacking, in some instances, did not provide clear access to the product. (The concern will be addressed.)

(d) CSM Matlock-Williams noted that there was an increase in the number of vitamin products being carried and thanked management for same. She also suggested relocating store maps to make them more accessible to customers as they enter the store. (To be taken under advisement.)

(e) LTC Hammond suggested that when vendors have product/prize drawings, that the name (first name and initial of last name) be posted. (To be considered/acted upon.)

(f) Mrs. Morse expressed concerns relative to the high cost of commissary items when compared to civilian stores. (Price verification studies are conducted and adjustments are made as required by DECA.)

(g) SGM McCall inquired as to the status of additional cart corrals. (More are being considered.)

(h) COL Rice addressed an issue raised by a visitor to the installation as it pertained to the "cluttered with trash appearance of the the commissary parking lot" and stated that the policing of the lot is not the commissary's responsibility, but the installations. MSgt Plummer asked if personnel could be contracted to do the task. COL Rice explained the impact that Project A76 had on maintaining, etc., of the installation and funding was not available to address this concern. A suggestion

was made that an article be placed in the Soundoff newspaper bringing attention to the responsibility that customers have for maintaining the appearance of the commissary parking lot so that it reflects the high standard achieved by the store. All were in concurrence with the suggestion and COL Rice was to effect the coordination for same.

c. Mr. Vincent James, Manager, Fort Meade PX, introduced Ms Leslie Walton, new products and promotions manager, and together they addressed the following:

(1) Planned Easter sale and Easter egg hunt.

(2) Upcoming fashion show in coordination with the Retired Officers Wives Club.

(3) The new computers and accessories that are to be carried.

(4) In conjunction with the grand re-opening of the Garden Shop, a vendor give-away will be conducted on 29 March 2008.

(5) Child safety event, in cooperation with the Military Police, will be held on 5 April 2008.

(6) In coordination with MWR, a Ladies Night Out will be hosted on 8 May 2008 at the Fort Meade Pavilion.

(7) A Mothers Day sale will be held at the PX on 9 May 2008.

(8) The benefits of registering with the Buddy List and the Price Challenge policy.

(9) Extended an invitation to visit them whenever we are at the store.

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

a. The new position in his office that had been filled.

b. The planned RAD for Friday, 17 October 2008, at the Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center. More to follow.

c. The RSO newsletter that is on the internet at the Fort Meade Retirement Services homepage at:

www.ftmeade.army.mil/rso-index.html.

5. OLD BUSINESS: COL Rice addressed the following:

a. The recent article in the Army Echoes that pertained to the Army Family Covenant and recommended that all read same.

b. The legislation that increased the SBP payment for social security recipients from 35% to 55% effective 1 April 2008.

c. The legislation outlining the respect for our national flag.

d. The use of veteran service organizations to aid veterans in filing disability claims. SGM McCall reiterated the assistance that the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs can provide and listed their contact telephone number, 866-793-1577.

6. NEW BUSINESS: COL Rice reported on the \$42 million Warrior Transition Center that is to be constructed at Fort Meade and those planned at other installations.

7. APG UPDATE: COL Rice reported that CSM Barry Decker had resigned as their Co-Chairman and that they are seeking both a Chair and Co-Chair.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: No report rendered, representative did not attend.

9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL: COL Uemura stated that he had nothing to report. Mrs. Morse remarked that appointments at KACC can now be made by internet. She also questioned the placement of a VA Clinic at Fort Meade. COL Rice stated that this project may be in jeopardy and may not be located at Fort Meade.

(NOTE: COL Uemura, who provides assistance in preparing taxes, remarked on the Tax Stimulus program and received a number of queries. An extensive discussion relative to other tax questions followed.

10. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: SGM Funk had nothing to add to the information provided by Mr. Macias, but did recognize the presence of Mr. Walter Young, another commissary manager, who had joined us and who reiterated the appreciation for the support given by military retirees.

11. ARMY FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL: Mrs. Morse had nothing to report.

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

a. The availability on-line, of the 2008 edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents book at www.va.gov.

b. Distributed news articles that pertained to:

(1) Spread the Word for Tricare in Old-Fashioned Ways. Many who require relative information are not computer friendly and unable to access and obtain the answers to the information that they seek. The need to provide the information by word-of-mouth, person-to-person, is necessary and it behooves those on military retiree councils, veteran service organizations and the like, to reach out and pass the word. DEERS can help (800) 538-9552.

(2) More Job Help Needed for Disabled Veterans, addressed in part, the report on findings made by several federal commissions and the need to begin action on same.

c. The veterans related issues being addressed by the State of Maryland during their current session.

d. Requested COL Rice to remark on other Maryland veteran related bills and he remarked on the income tax subtraction initiative for military retired pay that my be in trouble.

e. Job help for disabled veterans offered by the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. Point of contact for information is Ms Laurie Atherholt at (410)260-3840.

f. Council meeting schedule:

Saturday, 7 June 2008 - Have a "Farewell Breakfast" for COL and Mrs. McCreedy as he prepares to retire. To review plans for RAD 2008, entertain suggestions for items to be submitted to the Army Chief of Staff Council.

Saturday, 27 September 2008 - Finalize plans for RAD 2008, receive donated door prizes from council members; review issues for the Army Chief of Staff Council.

Saturday, 6 December 2008 - Review RAD 2008 event and comments received.

Saturday, 7 March 2009 - Open.

13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

a. SSG Hollman distributed applications for the Homestead Tax Credit Eligibility and discussed the purpose for filing same.

b. Mr. James and Ms Walton distributed assorted gifts to those in attendance.

c. SGM McCall thanked all for their hard work and support of the Council's mission.

14. The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m. with a reminder that the next meeting would be a breakfast meeting at The Courses (Fort Meade golf clubhouse), 8 a.m., 7 June 2008, to honor the McCreedys.

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

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