

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The one hundred and Eleventh (111) meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at Bldg 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland at 9:09 a.m., 7 March 2009. 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)
MAJ William Heath, USA Ret
CW3 Gregory Crites, USN Ret
CSM Sandra Matlock-Williams, USA Ret
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret
1SG Richard Gillman, USAR Ret
1SG Eugene Johnson, USAR Ret
SFC Robert Caswell, USA Ret
SFC Carlo Deporto, USA Ret
MSGT Charles Plummer, USAF Ret
SFC Richard Zalusky, USA Ret (APG)
SSG Walter B. Hollman, Sr., USA Ret
Mrs. Cecille Morse

2. The meeting was called to order with a welcome from COL Rice who introduced SFC Richard Zalusky as the recently appointed co-chairman of the Aberdeen Proving Ground Retiree Sub-council. The invocation was given by SFC DePorto, followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance led by SGM McCall.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** COL Rice reviewed the minutes of the Council's meeting of 6 December 2008 with the council who accepted the minutes unanimously. He then remarked of the recently published new Army Echoes highlighting some of its entries. COL Rice reported on the passing of long time council member CPT Arthur Rogers III, USA Ret. a veteran of the Vietnam war where he was severely wounded and who has been in failing health. He died in January 2009 and was to be buried in Arlington on 13 March 2009. Prayers were offered for the family.

COL Rice then introduced the following guest:

a. Mr. Vincent James, PX Manager, who shared the following comments:

(1) The value of on-line shopping and those business' that have partnered with AAFES and offer special military

discounts on products and services, and that some monies generated through this program are returned to military installations.

(2) The Garden Shop is preparing for its grand opening on 18 April 2009,

(3) The value of having and using the Military Star Card credit card. Many products and services are discounted when it is used (all first day purchases made with the Starcard receive an automatic 10% discount).

(4) Thanked the retired military community for their outstanding and continued support of the PX and appreciated the feedback received (both positive and negative) for it aids him in management of the store.

(5) Issued gift bags to all in attendance.

(6) The new car care center is up and running and is a concession to the PX. COL Rice remarked that he thought the repair costs were kind of pricey. Others thought so too.

(7) The discount clothing sale that is in progress.

(8) Questions and answers.

Mrs. Morse - Can extended service plans purchased with other Mastercards other than the Military Starcard be eligible for repairs through the PX? (No.)

CSM Matlock-Williams - The gift cards should be located near the front of the store to prevent having to search for them. (To be taken under advisement.)

b. Mr. Frank Macias (Assistant Commissary Manager) discussed the following:

(1) Thanked the military retiree community for their continued outstanding support.

(2) The Commissary Scholarship Program is seeking more applicants.

(3) A case lot sale is scheduled for 21 - 24 May 2009 and another in September 2009. Dates will be announced.

(4) Cashiers are needed and students in grades 11 and 12 are eligible to apply.

(5) Accepted questions and comments from attendees:

MSgt Plummer - Recently purchased bread that was found to have mold on some slices and some fruit was over ripe. (Return the bread for refund and bring the fruit to the attention of the floor manager when observed.)

CW3 Crites - Many carts remain in an ill state of repair, an issue that was presented at the Council's last meeting. (Action is being taken to effect repairs.)

SFC Caswell - Described an incident that occurred in the checkout line that had the potential for becoming extremely hostile. (The incident was brought under control and steps are being taken to preclude a recurrence.)

c. COL (USA Ret) Bernard Cullen, Director of Human Resources, addressed the following:

(1) Makeover of the ID Card section has proven to be very effective. There is a display sign that shows waiting time for those that walk-in to be seen and appointments can even be made on-line.

(2) Because of perceived conflicts and also competition for his time, COL Rice has submitted his resignation from the council, to the Installation Commander. Several of the persons invited to be his replacement are General officers. Stay tuned.

(3) Questions and Answers:

SFC Caswell remarked that his wife had recently dies and requested information on the disposition of her ID Card. (Bring it to the ID Card section for turn in.) He also described the incident with the Veteran Affairs and DFAS that declared him dead, wanted all monies received to be returned, his retired pay was halted creating hardships. He is working with Senator Mikulski's office, Retired pay and others to correct this problem. The council extended condolences to SFC Caswell on the death of his wife.

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

a. The RAD for 2009 is scheduled for 9 October at the Pavilion. Invitations to organizations are being sent. More to be discussed the 6 June meeting.

b. Modification to the entrances of building 2234 are being made which will disrupt the regular traffic flow, but will aid in the installation of an elevator, etc.

c. The on-line newsletter has been posted and includes information relative to upcoming events.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a. A Benefits Symposium is scheduled for Friday, 29 May 2009. Mrs. Morse is the coordinator for this event (see the on-line newsletter for more information). Volunteers from the

Council are needed. Those interested, call SGM McCall at (301)395-0176.

6. NEW BUSINESS: None.

7. APG UPDATE: SFC Zalusky reported on the following:

a. The inactivity of their council was due to the retirement of all of its members. They are re-establishing themselves and a chairman. LTC Joe Traino has been appointed.

b. The APG RAD is scheduled for 17 October 2009 with more information to follow. Our council extended their willingness to assist them where they can.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: Representative not present.

9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL: In COL Uemura's absence, Mrs. Morse attended their latest meeting and reported that:

a. Their Adverse Weather Policy for appointments is recorded at (301)677-6323.

b. Their council is seeking volunteers.

c. For those who qualify to be seen at Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center for prescriptions or other services, requires the individual to be in possession of a yellow **THIRD PARTY OTHER HEALTH INSURANCE VERIFICATION CARD** that KACC issues.

10. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: SGM Funk had nothing to add to Mr. Macias' report.

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

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

a. Status of Maryland House Bill 751 that pertains to Income Tax - Military Retirement Income. Efforts to have military retired pay made tax exempt is running into trouble mainly due to the current economic conditions. COL Rice reported that the same is true for his Senate's companion bill. Discussion followed.

b. The efforts by the Commander of KACC to halt the shuttle service to Walter Reed. Since the shuttle service is considered a life line for the older military retiree and their spouse, the elimination of this service would be considered devastating at the least for them to have to drive their car in such traffic to make appointments is a great safety concern and to have to pay for a taxi to take them would be financially crippling. The effort to reconsider the proposed policy is greatly welcomed.

If possible, allow the community to provide input. The latest report is that this shuttle service will be continued indefinitely.

c. The Maryland State Department of Veterans Affairs is conducting Veterans Musters around the state and one is to be planned for Anne Arundel County in the future. It is recommended that when dates are identified, that our council partner with them for it will be a vehicle to reach our retired families from a different venue.

d. Since many military (retired and active) belong to credit unions, SGM McCall, a president of a credit unions board of directors, asked permission to address the council and to shed some light on the affect the current financial crisis may have on credit unions. Credit unions are financially safe and sound. The regulatory agency that regulates credit union operations (National Credit Unit Administration) required all of their credit unions to maintain a capital ratio of at least 7% or higher. Those that are not are ten supervised by the NCUA. The majority of credit unions operate with a capital ration of 8% or higher which indicates that their member/owners investment are safe and sound. Additionally, the FDIC insures qualified accounts up to \$250,000.00 which is in affect through 31 Dec 10. Efforts are on-going to extend that date.

e. Council Meeting Schedule:

Saturday, 6 June 2009 - Plan for RAD 2009 and Council's participation.

Saturday, 12 September 2009 - Finalize RAD plans and how the council will be utilized. Additionally, review suggestions for the Chief of Staffs annual meeting.

Saturday, 5 December 2009, review RAD 2009 activity and discuss entries submitted for the Chief of Staffs Council.

13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

a. Regarding CPT Rogers' passing, COL Rice remarked on the need for military retirees to make their families aware of the actions their family must take upon their passing to include agencies to notify, people to notify, and the list goes on. Each Army Echoes and the Retired, Still Serving newsletters contain that information.

b. COL Rice remarked on the policy for receiving a military funeral. Requirements must be reviewed prior to the death of the eligible member.

c. The PX issued additional gifts.

14. The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m. with a reminder that the next meeting would be held at bldg 2234 Huber Road, Fort Meade at 9 a.m., 6 June 2009.

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

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