DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE
UNIT 29351
APO AE 09096-9351

AEPE

18 June 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council Meeting

1. The minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council meeting of 14 May 2014 have been reviewed and approved.

2. The point of contact for this memorandum is COL (Ret) Robert Mentell, President, Army in Europe Retiree Council at [+49] (171) 786-1669 or email robert.a.mentell.vol@mail.mil.

Encl

LARRY D. GOTTARDI
Deputy Chief of Staff, G1

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EA Deputy Garrison Manager / Sergeant Major
EA Garrison RSO
EA Co-Chair, Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council
EA Member, European Tri-Component Retiree Council
EA Member, Army in Europe Retiree Council

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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AEPE-AERC

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanding General, United States Army, Europe, ATTN: AECG, Unit 29351, APO AE 09096

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council Meeting

1. The 130th meeting of the Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC) convened at 0915 hours on 14 May 2014 in the USAREUR G-1 conference room at Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden. The first meeting was held on 29 August 1980.

2. The following persons were present:

a. Members:

COL (Ret) Robert A. Mentell	President
LTC (Ret) David V. Fulton	Vice President
CW3 (Ret) Sandra K. Simpson	Secretary
COL (Ret) Gary Langford	Member
LTC (Ret) William K. Bergman	Member
LTC (Ret) Sheldon L. Dick	Member
CW4 (Ret) Melanie A. Ladra	Member
SGM (Ret) Donald Norris	Member
SGM (Ret) David B. Stewart	Member

b. Advisory Members:

COL Michael R. Matthews	Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G1, USAREUR, and USAREUR G1 Representative to the Council
Mr. Robert P. Schoffman	Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, IMCOM-Europe
Mr. Mike Malone	IMCOM-Europe RSO

c. Associate Members:

CDR (USN, Ret) Thomas J. Brennan	European Member of the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council, (joining by telephone) representing CDMCM (USN, Ret) Bruno Capista, USNAVEUR Associate Member

d. Visitors:

Mr. Ed Francis	Chief, Policy Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff, G1, USAREUR
Ms. Shelly Ann Mimms	RSO, USAG Wiesbaden

3. Opening Remarks. The Vice President opened the meeting as the President was participating in an office call with the USAREUR Commanding General.

a. LTC (Ret) Fulton welcomed new members - COL (Ret) Langford who joined the council at the last meeting (albeit via DCO) and LTC (Ret) Bergman who is joining the council at this meeting.

b. The Vice President requested that council members consider possible issues to raise with the CG during his visit with the council.

4. Agenda and Minutes.

a. The agenda was accepted as presented.

b. In reviewing the minutes, Mr. Malone noted a change to the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) schedules for United States Army Garrison (USAG) Ansbach from 16 May 2014 to 22 May 2014 and USAG Stuttgart from 23 October 2014 to 9 October 2014. The sequence in numbering on page 6 was incorrect and the template will be changed to reflect correct numbering for the current meeting.

5. President's Report.

a. The Executive Committee accepted COL (Ret) Westpheling's resignation.

b. The DCofS, G1 approved the following.

(1) LTC (Ret) Bergman's appointment to membership.

(2) LTC (Ret) Fulton's reappointment to membership and appointment to the office of Vice President.

(3) CW3 (Ret) Simpson's reappointment to membership and to the office of Secretary.

c. Review of the Quarter:

(1) At the invitation of the USEUCOM J1, the European Tri-Component Retiree Council briefed the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission on the situation, concerns and issues of military retirees and annuitants in the European Theater. Four issues were presented:

(a) Expansion of TRICARE Preferred Provider Network Program Overseas.

(b) Employment of Retired Service Members Overseas.

(c) Categorization of Retired Service Members for DoDDS Tuition.

(d) Postal support to retired service members thru overseas military post offices.

(2) The council President obtained and disseminated "authoritative guidance on the impact of the Affordable Care Act on TRICARE beneficiaries. See: https://ermc.amedd.army.mil/affordable_care_act-military_health_system.pdf.

d. Office calls with Army in Europe leadership:

(1) On Tuesday, 13 May 2014, the council President had an office call with the Deputy Commanding General, met with the USAG Wiesbaden Directorate of Human Resources and Retirement Services Officer (RSO), and received guidance from the G1.

(2) On Wednesday, 14 May 2014, the USAREUR G1 and the President had an office call with the USAREUR Commanding General.

6. DCofS, G1, Report (COL Matthews).

a. USAREUR Transformation Update:

(1) Both the CG and the DCG will be retiring later this year. The selection of the new CG has not yet been announced. The new DCG will be BG Piatt, the current JMTC commander.

(2) USAREUR G3 will provide the Council with a force structure up-date later in the day.

b. Status of Budget Constraints: The 50% cap on TDY expenditures is still in place. G1 will continue to support the council to the best of its ability.

7. IMCOM-Europe Report (Mr. Schoffman).

a. IMCOM-Europe Transformation Update: Transformation is still very dynamic. USAG Hohenfels has inactivated as a garrison but is still active as a site under USAG Bavaria. USAG Ansbach will assume responsibility for the areas of USAG Bamberg and USAG Schweinfurt as they close later in the fiscal year. Northern Germany is now supported by the Schinnen Tri-Border Community instead of by USAG Wiesbaden. USAG Baumholder will inactivate as a garrison but will still be active as a site under USAG Rheinland-Pfalz.

b. Changes in Leadership: IMCOM-Europe Region Director will retire this fall. A new director has not been selected as of this date.

c. Delivery of Retirement Services (Future): Despite the fact that the region continues to lose personnel spaces, Mr. Schoffman confirmed that IMCOM-Europe will continue to designate a Region RSO should Mr. Malone be reassigned under the Priority Placement Program. It will also continue to designate an RSO at each of the seven enduring garrisons which have the primary responsibility for delivery of retirement services.

8. Retirement Services Officer Report (Mr. Malone).

a. IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin: The bulletin will be published in June. Mr. Malone requested any input from the Council be provided to him within the next week.

b. Update on Garrison RSOs: USAG Wiesbaden has a new RSO, Ms. Shelly Ann Mimms, and USAG Vicenza has an acting RSO until the recruitment and selection process is completed. Most RSOs have completed the new on-line training for RSOs. This training is now an annual requirement.

c. 2014 Garrison RAD Update: Date for the Ansbach RAD has been changed to 22 May 2014 and for Stuttgart to 9 October 2014. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has indicated that they have travel money to send a representative to our RADs. However, the IMCOM-E RSO opined that IMCOM-Europe would not support the visit due to the fact that two RADs have already been held. Discussion ensued about scheduling a DFAS visit to USAG Ansbach and USAG Bavaria during October even if it is not a fully-fledged RAD.

d. RSO/BOSS Initiative: No update.

e. Garrison Demographics: Mr. Malone presented the demographics, by garrison, of members of the retired community – retired service members, annuitants and other survivors. The increase in the retired community is partly attributable to correcting addresses in our data bases.

f. RSO Generic Email Addresses: Two garrisons are having challenges but those should be fixed within a day or so.

9. Command Visit: LTG Campbell, Commanding General, USAREUR.

a. The CG thanked the council for the support it provides to the Army and to retired Soldiers.

b. The CG expressed support for the Army's new Soldier for Life (SFL) program, to which the Retirement Services Program now belongs. He firmly believes "resourcing" is the key to success and sustainability of the SFL concept.

c. The CG is tracking the major issues of concern to retirees such as military postal service (MPS) mail weight limitations, access to care at medical facilities, and support at the garrison level. He will work with EUCOM to help facilitate solutions.

d. At present, the theater manpower and structure plan projects theater strength at 29,000 Soldiers and 7 garrisons by 2018. There are numerous force structure studies ongoing and there is a good possibility there will be more changes.

e. LTG Campbell presented USAREUR Certificates of Appreciation to Council members.

10. Back-Briefing: 2014 Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council (SGM (Ret) Stewart).

a. Chief's Report: The report that was briefed to the Chief of Staff, Army, consisted of the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council (CSARC's) recommendation on how the Army should address some of their key concerns.

(1) Health Care Concerns:

(a) Support welcoming retired Soldiers and their families who were eligible for Medicare back into military treatment facilities.

(b) Support the maintenance of Express Script co-pays for generic drugs at no cost and minimal co-pay increases for brand name pharmaceuticals. The council also supported the idea that co-pays would not be raised more than the current year cost of living allowance (COLA).

(2) Benefits and Entitlement concerns:

(a) Retain the commissary benefit.

(b) Support legislation that maintains the current COLA calculation methodology.

(c) Issuing permanent ID cards to spouses over 65.

(3) Retirement Services and Enterprise Level communications/concerns:

(a) Conduct an independent regulatory review to identify all sources of funding to support RADs.

(b) Institutionalize the Soldier For Life Program.

b. Installation Report: The Installation Report contained the CSARC's comments on the 22 issues submitted by garrison and Army Service Component Command Retiree Councils. There were six issues in the Health Care category, seven issues in the Benefits and Entitlements category and nine issues in the Retirement Services category.

c. Army in Europe Issues: The CSARC supported the issues submitted by the Army in Europe.

(1) Expansion of TRICARE Preferred Provider Network Program Overseas.

(2) Support to retired Soldiers and their Families and Survivors.

(3) Retired Soldier Identification Badge for the new Army Service Uniform.

(4) Support USAREUR and EUSA collaborating and developing a consolidated position and recommendation for raising the weight limit on MPS mail overseas. [The USAREUR issue is not SOFA related, while EUSA believes that their issue is SOFA related. COL (Ret) Mentell agreed to review the USFK SOFA to determine similarities or differences.]

NOTE: Copies of both reports are available on the Soldier For Life website at: http://www.soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/RetireeCouncil.html.

11. Back-Briefing: 2013 Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council (CDR (Ret)Tom Brennan).

a. The report of the meeting of the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council in August 2013 has just been released.

(1) There were a number of TRICARE issues including the need for more providers and a recommendation that payments should be pre-tax dollars similar to other USG health benefit plans.

(2) The council recommended that the State Department engage with the Spanish government on the issue of retired service members in Spain not being able to use the exchange and commissary. This will most likely not happen until late 2014.

(3) The council recommended the adoption of a more formal retiree council structure as the Navy does not have the same kind of organized support for retirees as the Army does.

(4) The council recommended that the MPS mail weight limit for retirees overseas be raised to five pounds.

b. Issues for this year's meeting of the SecNavRC in August 2014 will include:

(1) The five pound MPS mail issue

(2) A review of the PX/commissary issue with the Spanish government concerning access for retirees to the facilities in NS Rota

(3) Tuition rate for the children of retired service members in DODDS Europe schools.

(4) Support by the VA.

(5) More opportunities for overseas employment for Retired Service Members.

12. Special Briefing: USAREUR Force Structure/Operational Update. The Chief, Strategy, Policy and Program Division, DCofS, G3, provided an update for the council. Included in the briefing was a chart showing regional challenges occurring in the EUCOM, AFRICOM, and CENTCOM AORs, plus a slide showing how USAREUR is uniquely positioned to guarantee

strategic access into all those areas. He also discussed the on-going European Infrastructure Consolidation study the Department of Defense is conducting.

13. Special Update: Wounded Warrior Program (CW4 (Ret) Ladra).

a. Program is run by the medical command to assist wounded warriors through the medical process to either return to active duty or discharge. The Soldiers remain in their units until their medical evaluation boards or physical evaluation boards are completed and appropriate recommendations made.

b. While there is no specific role that retired Soldiers have in this process, there are potential roles retired Soldiers could undertake with the Soldiers in the Warrior Transition Battalion. The support would best be initiated by a garrison retiree council with the local Warrior Transition unit. This would fall within the purview of the SFL program.

14. Progress Report: 2014 Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day hosted by USAG Wiesbaden. The AE RAD will be held on Saturday, 25 October 2014, at a location to be determined on Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden.

a. Ms. Mimms reported that she is working on the operations order. Ongoing discussions concerning the location are being held with a view to eliminating some of the issues that occurred during last year's RAD.

b. President reported on the Speakers' Program:

(1) LTG Campbell, CG, USAREUR, has accepted the invitation to provide Commander's Comments.

(2) LTG (Ret) Lovelace, Co-Chair, Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council, has been invited to be the Keynote Speaker.

(3) The President will present a Retired Soldier Update providing details on concerns and issues from the Army in Europe perspective.

(4) The President will meet with representatives from Europe Regional Medical Command, Europe Regional Dental Command, and the TRICARE Area Office Eurasia/Africa to determine the form of the Healthcare Roundtable.

(5) The President will again host a meeting of retiree council presidents (or their representatives).

c. A representative of AUSA reported that it was planning on again sponsoring an ice breaker on the evening before the AE RAD for those participants who arrive on that Friday at a location to be determined.

15. Progress Report: Liaison Responsibilities (SGM (Ret) Norris).

a. Total percentage of collective liaison efforts by council members continued to be stable this quarter despite the fact that one community (Vicenza) was still without council member presence and one community (Stuttgart) only recently received council member presence and that one council member was unavailable for health reasons.

b. Since the last meeting, the nine members of the council made timely liaison with 86% of the 145 assigned contacts.

16. Progress Report: Retiree info List Server (LTC (Ret) Dick).

a. There are still about 200 error message that the server reports after each posting. They occur mainly because of out-dated email addresses. LTC (Ret) Dick will review the error listings either to correct the addresses or to delete the ones that cannot be obviously corrected.

b. The subscription procedures to the RetireeInfo List Server can be accessed by clicking on the RetireeInfo List Server notice at the lower right-hand corner of the USAREUR G1 web page at http://www.eur.army.mil/g1/. Mr. Malone agreed to include the procedures in the next issue of the IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin.

c. Council members are reminded to share suggested postings with COL (Ret) Mentell.

17. Progress Report: AERC Webpage (SGM (Ret) Stewart). SGM (Ret) Stewart will be working with the web master to update the AERC webpage to be able to include RetireeInfo List Server postings.

18. Progress Report: Recording Volunteer Hours (COL (Ret) Mentell). Council reminded to post their hours directly to VMIS or send them to COL (Ret) Mentell for posting.

19. Observational Feedback (All). SGM (Ret) Stewart brought up an issue about German banks who do not accept international direct deposits because of new reporting requirements imposed by the US Department of the Treasury. He will conduct more research and report back.

20. Council Administration (COL (Ret) Mentell).

a. Existing Membership Vacancies: Vice Grunell (northern Italy area).

b. Projected Member Vacancies (thru 2nd Qtr, CY 15): COL (Ret) Mentell - 30 Jun 15

c. Existing Officer Vacancies: None

d. Projected Officer Vacancies (thru 2nd Qtr, CY 15): President - 30 Jun 15

21. Special Project. President asked the Vice President to chair a committee to consider the future of the Army in Europe Retiree Council to ensure continued relevancy of the council in light of the on-going transformation with the Army in Europe. The report-out is due at the October meeting.

22. Selection of Meeting Date/Adjournment. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 20 August 2014 via DCO. The meeting was adjourned at 1640.

Harold S. Schmidt
G1 XO
for MICHAEL R. MATTHEWS
COL, GS
DCofS, G1, Representative

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