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

AEPE 26 November 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 24 October 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 Garrison Commander / Command Sergeant Major
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 26 November 2014

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 132nd meeting of the Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC) convened at 0915 hours on 24 October 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 D. Langford	Member
LTC (Ret) Sheldon L. Dick	Member
CW4 (Ret) Melanie A. Ladra	Member
CSM (Ret) Samuel D. Coston	Member
SGM (Ret) Donald R. Norris	Member

b. Advisory Members:

COL Michael R. Matthews	Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G1, USAREUR, and USAREUR G1 Representative to the Council
Ms. Lynn R. Lott	Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, IMCOM-Europe
Mr. Mike Malone	Retirement Services Officer, IMCOM-Europe

c. Associate Members:

CMDCM (USN, Ret) Bruno Capista	USNAVEUR Retired Sailor Representative on the European Tri-Component Retiree Council
CMSgt (USAF, Ret) Bruce C. Collet	USAFE Retired Airman Representative on the European Tri-Component Retiree Council

d. Visitors

CW4 (USA, Ret) Robert A. Pierce	President, US Army Garrison Wiesbaden Retiree Council
Ms. Martha M. Matthews	Policy Branch, DCofS, G1, USAREUR

3. Opening Remarks.

a. President welcomed CSM Samuel Coston as a new member of the Council. CSM Coston resides in the vicinity of Vicenza, Italy, and works for USAG Vicenza. He is the former Command Sergeant Major of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

b. President announced that the Army in Europe nominated LTC Fulton for membership on the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree, Council replacing SGM Stewart whose term expires in April.

c. President introduced:

(1) Ms. Lott who joined the region from US Army South where she was the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G1. She is a retired US Army lieutenant colonel.

(2) Ms. Martha Matthews and CW4 (Ret) Pierce. Ms. Matthews is representing Mr. Ed Francis, Chief, Policy Branch, DCofS, G1, USAREUR, who could not participate in the Council meeting because, as Project Officer for the World War II Veterans Recognition, he was welcoming the WWII veterans arriving from Belgium and France.

4. Agenda and Minutes. The agenda was accepted as presented. Council reviewed the minutes of the 20 August AERC meeting and the following comments are noted: ensure retired service members are identified correctly by their retired rank.

5. President's Report.

a. Office calls with Army in Europe Leadership: President presented "Supporting Retired Soldiers in the Army in Europe" briefings to:

(1) LTG Walter Piatt, Deputy Commanding General, USAREUR

(2) COL Mary Martin, Garrison Commander, USAG Wiesbaden

(3) COL Marvin Vannatter, Garrison Commander, USAG Benelux

b. Review of the Quarter:

(1) President met with representatives of the International Law and Operations Division, Office of the Judge Advocate, USAREUR. They reviewed a variety of Retired Soldier topics. One significant topic of discussion was in reference to the German government requiring Department of Defense (DOD) members to pay taxes to the German government when German governmental officials determine there is no "intention to return." This issue is being applied to DOD civilians as well as to uniformed members. There is a "Retired Soldier component" to this matter as many of the DOD civilian employees are also Retired Soldiers.

(2) President along with LTC Fulton and Mr. Francis participated in several IPRs for the Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day hosted by USAG Wiesbaden.

(3) President represented the AERC at the USAG Benelux Retiree Appreciation Day.

c. Meeting with DA Retirement Services Officer (RSO): During a recent trip to Washington, President and Vice President met with the DA RSO, Mr. John Radke and the Deputy DA RSO, Mr. Mark Overberg.

d. Chain of Command and Retiree Council Channels: The AERC is the retiree council of the Army Service Component Command in Europe. Its members are appointed by and work for Commanding General, USAREUR, under the proponency of the USAREUR G1. Members of garrison retiree councils are appointed by and work for their respective garrison commanders. Although there is communication between the councils on technical matters, issues and concerns identified by garrison councils needs to be raised through garrison command channels. To do otherwise would be to "short-circuit" the respective chains of command.

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

a. USAREUR Transformation Update: Change of Command ceremony for LTG Campbell is at 1100 hours on 5 November on the soccer field at Clay Kaserne. The farewell/retirement ceremony is the same day at 0900 at Freedom Field. Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) study involving the future of aviation in the Army is underway and no results have been announced at this time. No results of the European Infrastructure Consolidation Study have been announced either.

b. Status of Staffing and Budget Reductions: USAREUR is operating under a continuing resolution authority (CRA) at this time.

7. IMCOM-Europe Report (Mr. Malone for Ms. Lott).

a. IMCOM-Europe Transformation Update: Bamberg and Schweinfurt garrisons are both closed. Coleman Barracks in Mannheim closed as of 1 October.

b. Changes in Leadership: The change of command ceremony for the Europe Region director is currently scheduled for 4 November. However, the name of the incoming director has not yet been announced.

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

a. IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin for the Army in Europe: No update.

b. Update on Garrison Retiree Services Officers (RSOs): A new RSO will be coming into USAG Vicenza. All other garrisons have RSOs who have been in place for some time and are all fully trained.

c. 2014 Garrison Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) Update:

(1) Mr. Malone pointed out that the last RAD for the year will be the Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day hosted by USAG Wiesbaden (AE RAD) on 25 October. IMCOM-E is still computing the numbers of attendees at the various garrison RADs. Mr. Malone, who has provided DFAS-type services at the garrison RADs, said that he had not recovered any money for any retired service members this year which suggests that the financial service provided during the year is working well.

(2) COL Mentell, who represented the AERC at the USAG Benelux RAD, and COL Langford, who represented the AERC at the RADs for USAG Rheinland-Pfalz/Ramstein AB, USAG Stuttgart, and USAG Vicenza shared their feedback on those events.

d. Garrison Retiree Appreciation Day 2015 Preview: The scheduled for the garrison RADs for CY 15, including the Army in Europe RAD hosted by USAG Wiesbaden, have been tentatively scheduled with many of them planned for weekdays to mitigate any negative effects of a potential sequestration. The specific dates are pending coordination with the Army in Europe Retirement Services Program Oversight Committee after which they will be releasable.

9. Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day 2014 Update.

a. Garrison Preparations (CW4 Pierce): The Community Activity Center (CAC) is prepared and all service activities supporting the RAD are reporting green. USAG Wiesbaden is trying to put a positive spin on the somewhat less than optimal support from the medical and dental clinics. The ice breaker, which is the kick-off for the event, is set for the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center at 1800 on 24 October.

b. Speakers' Program (COL Mentell): LTG Campbell will open the session with Commander's Comments. The Commanding General of U.S. Army Europe Regional Medical Command, BG Coots, will be the keynote speaker. COL Mentell will deliver an update to all attendees on Retired Soldier issues.

c. World War II Veterans Recognition (LTC Fulton): Of the 18 World War II veterans who have been identified as living in Europe, nine of them along with six spouses will participate in this recognition which should be the highlight of this year's AE RAD. LTG Campbell and CSM Rocco, USAG Wiesbaden, will present certificates of appreciation signed by President Obama to those who attend. All of the veterans will be at the ice breaker where members of the community can meet and talk with them. Arrangements have been made for the veterans and their spouses to visit General and Ms. Campbell just prior to the AE RAD itself. The visit will be capped by a lunch with Solders in the Clay Kaserne Dining Facility on Saturday.

d. Healthcare Roundtable (SGM Norris): COL Sara Breckenridge-Sproat, Regional Nurse Executive, US Army Europe Regional Medical Command; COL Michael G. Doran, Commander, US Army Europe Regional Dental Command; and MSgt (USAF) Christina E.

Black, Senior Enlisted Advisor, TRICARE Area Office Eurasia-Africa, will respond to healthcare questions once the formal portion of the program has been completed.

10. USNAVEUR Retiree Council Update (CMDCM Capista). He reported that he is still working to see what can be done before the European Tri-Service Retiree Council (ETRC) meeting in December. Access to medical care and medications is not a problem in Italy.

11. USAFE Retiree Council Update (CMSGT Collet).

a. There have been no changes to the 2014 USAF Retiree Council (USAF RC) issues since they were presented to the AERC at its August meeting. Topics for the 2015 USAF RC are due by January.

b. At the USAG Rheinland-Pfalz / Ramstein AB RAD, a survey was initiated and the major issues identified by retirees were: access to health care, the 16 ounce mail limitation, access to prescription medications, and the competing nature of "Hire the Vet" versus hiring retired service members for federal jobs.

c. The next meeting of the ETRC, which he will chair, is scheduled for 10 December at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart.

12. Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council (CSARC) 2015 Issues.

a. The President briefly reviewed standing / on-going 2014 CSARC issues.

b. IMCOM-Europe Proposed Issues (Mr. Malone)

(1) Retiree Identification Cards: It is being recommended that Retired Soldier ID cards be made to look that same as active duty Soldier ID cards in order to be consistent with the Soldier for Life program. During the discussion, it was identified that there is a valid requirement for cyber security and encryption for systems that Retired Soldiers access on a routine basis, such as MyPay. A common-access card (CAC) would provide the Retired Soldier a means of cyber-secure access. The Council supported the issue. COL Langford volunteered to draft the issue paper.

(2) IACS Registration: A question was raised as to why a retired service member has to renew his/her IACS registration every four or five years as his/her ID card has an indefinite expiration date. This issue was deferred until Mr. Malone can ascertain the basis for the renewal requirement.

(3) Combat Unit Badge and Retiree Soldier Pin: The latest issue of Army Echoes announced the new Retired Soldier for Life pin – a lapel button for wear on civilian clothes and an identification badge for wear on the pocket of the ASU uniform. The proposed issue raised the concern that a Retired Soldier would have to remove the Combat Service ID pocket badge in order to properly wear the Retired Soldier ID badge. The recommendation was that a Retired

Soldier be permitted to wear both badges simultaneously. This issue was deferred until COL Mentell can ascertain from the DA RSO whether both pins can be worn at the same time.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the DA RSO clarified that the uniform regulation does indeed permit a Retired Soldier to wear both pins – the Retired Soldier for Life ID badge on the wearer's left breast pocket and the Combat Unit ID badge on the wearer's right breast pocket. Accordingly, this issue was dropped from consideration.

c. USAREUR Potential Issues (All)

(1) Retired Soldier Volunteer Training Program: As installations close and as spaces in the enduring garrisons are eliminated due to budget cuts and the availability of RSO services is continuing to decrease. At the same time, the size of the Retired Soldier community in Europe is remaining relatively constant. In many garrisons, well-intentioned Retired Soldiers are volunteering to "take care of our own." However, many of these Retired Soldier volunteers are not properly trained or adequately supervised. Consequently, many do not know the details of the programs on which they speak and the limits of what they can say. The DA RSO has established "remote training programs" for RSOs. The recommendation would be for the DA RSO to establish a similar "remote training program" for Retired Soldier Volunteers. The Council supported this issue.

(2) Application of 5-Year Rule to Overseas Hires: Although Retired Soldiers are also impacted by the implementation of this concept, the consensus from the discussion was that it was primarily a civilian personnel issue. Application of the rule varies by location and command. Council recommended no action on this item at this time.

(3) Test Program for Increasing the Military Postal Office (MPO) Weight Limit: Discussion focused around trying to understand the rationale for USAFE not supporting a test program to garner information on the impacts of raising the limit from less than 16-ounces to 5-pounds. Without USAFE support, USEUCOM says it will not support. The component retired representatives on the European Tri-Component Retiree Council (ETRC) agreed to discuss possible ways forward in advance of the ETRC meeting on 10 December.

13. Progress Report: AERC Public Affairs Plan (SGM Stewart). No update.

14. Progress Report: Liaison Responsibilities (SGM Norris).

a. Total percentage of collective liaison efforts by Council members remained stable this quarter despite the fact that one community (Vicenza) just received Council member presence.

b. Since the last meeting, the nine members of the Council made timely liaison with 76% of the 131 assigned contacts.

c. President reminded Council members of the importance of this function.

15. Progress Report: Retiree Info List Server (LTC Dick). The list still has about 1,700 subscribers. LTC Dick is experiencing challenges accessing and working with the list server.

16. Progress Report: Recording Volunteer Hours (COL Mentell). COL Mentell reminded members to input their hours and provided a brief tutorial to CSM Coston so that he could record his hours.

17. Progress Report: AERC Webpage (All). No Update

18. AERC Future (All). In order to ensure the AERC remains current, responsive, and relevant in dealing with tomorrow's issues and concerns of the Retired Soldier Community in Europe, the President appointed at the last meeting a Committee of the Whole, under the chair of the Vice President, to consider pertinent issues. At this meeting, he initiated a brain-storming session to identify some of those concerns. The council developed a list of questions that will be formatted and sent out to the Council members for their review and returned to the Vice President. All AERC members were asked to come to the next AERC meeting prepared to discuss in detail.

19. Observational Feedback (All). SGM Norris participated in the Ansbach Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) conference and encouraged members to attend in their respective communities, a sentiment echoed by the President.

20. Council Administration (COL Mentell).

a. Existing membership vacancies:
   None

b. Projected member vacancies (thru 4th Qtr, CY 15)
   COL Mentell -30 June 15
   SGM Norris - 30 Sep 15

c. Anticipated member vacancies (thru 4th Qtr, CY 15)
   SGM Stewart - 30 June 15

d. Existing officer vacancies
   None

e. Projected officer vacancies (thru 4th Qtr, CY 15)
   President - 30 June 15

f. Anticipated officer vacancies (thru 4th Qtr, CY 15)
   None

21. Review of Immediate Action List (LTC Fulton). No update.

22. Selection of Meeting Date/Adjournment. The next meeting will be on 4 February 2015 via DCO or teleconference. The meeting was adjourned at 1530.

MICHAEL R. MATTHEWS
COL, GS
DCofS, G1, Representative

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President