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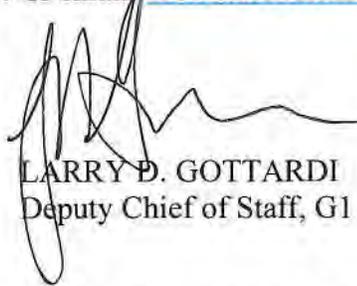
12 March 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Minutes of the European Tri-Component Retiree Council Meetings

1. The minutes of the European Tri-Component Retiree Council meetings of 10 December 2014 are forwarded for your information.
2. The point of contact for this memorandum is COL(R) 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 RSO
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EA Member, European Tri-Component Retiree Council
EA Member, Army in Europe Retiree Council



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCES IN EUROPE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCES AFRICA

19 Feb 15

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: European Tri-Component Retiree Council

SUBJECT: Minutes of the European Tri-Component Retiree Council Meeting

1. The fall/ 2014 meeting of the European Tri-Component Retiree Council (ETRC) convened at Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden, 10 December 2014. The fall meeting is normally held at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart; however, the meeting was moved at the request of the Chair and concurrence of the members.

2. The following members participated:

- a. COL (USA) Michael Matthews Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, USAREUR/G1
- b. COL (USA, Ret) Robert Mentell President, Army in Europe Retiree Council
- c. CMSgt (USAF, Ret) Bruce Collet Senior Retired Airman Representative, USAFE, and ETRC chair
- d. CDMCM (USN, Ret) Bruno Capista Senior Retired Sailor Representative, USNAVEUR

3. The following members were unable to participate:

- a. COL (USA) Donald W. Stoner III Chief, Readiness Division, Manpower, Personnel & Administration Directorate, USEUCOM/J1 and Advisor to the ETRC
- b. Col (USAF) Scott Arcuri Director of Manpower, Personnel, and Services, USAFE-AFAFRICA/A1
- c. CDR (USN) Galo Chavez Director, Manpower and Personnel Directorate, N1, US Navy Region Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia
- d. MSG (USA) Dante Flojo Senior Enlisted Leader, Manpower, Personnel & Administration Directorate, USEUCOM/J1, and Advisor to the ETRC

4. Other participants:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| a. | Lt Col Robert Teschner | Chief, Posture Planning Branch, Posture Division
USEUCOM/J5-8 |
| b. | CDR (USN, Ret) Thomas Brennan | Navy in Europe Member of the Secretary of the
Navy Retiree Council |
| c. | SGM (USA, Ret) David Stewart
Staff, | Army in Europe Member (outgoing) of the Chief of
Army, Retiree Council |
| d. | LTC (USA, Ret) David Fulton
Staff, | Army in Europe Member (incoming) of the Chief of
Army, Retiree Council |
| e. | Mr. Eduardo G. Francis | Chief, Military Personnel Policy Branch, Military
Programs and Policy Division, Deputy Chief of
Staff, G-1, USAREUR |

5. Opening remarks.

a. CMSgt Collet, ETRC chair, opened the meeting at 0930 and turned the floor over to COL Matthews for opening comments.

b. COL Matthews thanked everyone for their continued service and what they provide the retired community. He stated there are many initiatives currently in play within the European community—primarily the evolving USAREUR footprint and missions. Underpinning these initiatives are the European Infrastructure Consolidation Study and the European Reassurance Initiative. The European Infrastructure Consolidation Study’s objectives are to reduce the footprint for long-term savings; similar to CONUS Base Realignment and Closure. The European Reassurance Initiative, on the other hand, addresses strategy and funding for the eastern area of NATO missions. At this time, all decisions are still pending and understandably, no information was available for release. COL Matthews went on to say that due to expected budget and personnel reductions, there will likely be an impact on the retired military community living in Europe but it was too premature to assess what those impacts may be.

c. CMSgt Collet thanked COL Matthews for USAREUR/G1’s support to the ETRC and his personal enduring commitment to the active duty and retired community living and serving in Europe.

6. Administration.

a. Agenda review: The council approved the agenda as presented with one administrative correction to add “Postal 16-ounce Weight Restriction” as a previous ETRC issue.

b. Meeting minute approval: To provide time for adequate review, CMSgt Collet asked the council to review the 15 July 2014 meeting minutes and provide their concurrence/comments after the Holiday season.

c. Goals and objectives: CMSgt Collet said there were three primary meeting goals: 1) collectively review and share retiree initiatives throughout the European area, 2) review current ETRC items, and 3) discuss new USAREUR, USNAVEUR and USAFE-AFAFRICA topics being considered to bring forward to component councils. The Army precedes the other components with its "call for topics" in December and the Navy and Air Force follow at the beginning of the new year.

7. Force Posture Update.

a. Lt Col Rob Teschner from the USEUCOM/J5-8 provided the force posture overview. His slides reflect a historical posture of US forces in Europe from 1955 to its current state and ties manning points to US strategies over the years. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, forces have steadily decreased from ~320,000 to its current state of ~65,000. Lt Col Teschner also briefed current base locations in Europe as well as new bases being constructed such as Redzikowo in Poland and Deveselu in Romania and those locations being returned such as Mannheim, Bamberg and Schweinfurt. In recent years, EUCCOM has reduced its number of bases from ~500 in 2000 to what is currently less than 250.

b. Lt Col Teschner also highlighted the European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) Study and European Reassurance Initiative (ERI); however, as results are still pending, it was too premature to discuss specific details.

c. CMSgt Collet thanked him for his excellent insight and for meeting with the ETRC. All council members asked that although the retired community cannot impact the EIC and ERI decisions, to please keep in mind the logistic/support tail that affects military retirees still living in the European theater.

8. Military Retirees in Europe Demographics.

a. COL Mentell presented demographic data (as of 30 September 2014) obtained from the Office of the Actuary, Department of Defense, on Retired Service Members and Annuitants with DFAS corresponding address in countries in the USEUCOM area of responsibility. (Annuitants are surviving family members of retired Service Members receiving monies from DFAS, e.g., SBP proceeds.)

b. Overview:

1) There were 13,853 Retired Service Members residing in 42 of the 51 countries in the USEUCOM area of responsibility.

2) In addition, there were 2,456 Annuitants residing in 29 of the 51 USEUCOM countries.

3) Approximately 33% of the Retired Service Members and approximately 83% of the annuitants were 65 years of age or older.

4) The number of retired service members remains virtually unchanged since FY 12, having decreased by 127 or approximately 1%.

5) The number of annuitants remains virtually unchanged since FY 12, having increased by 48 or approximately 2%.

6) Over the same period of time, the percentage of retired service members and annuitants over the age of 65 remained virtually unchanged.

c. Populations:

1) Of the 13,853 Retired Service Members, 6,531 (47%) were Retired Soldiers, 1,766 (13%) were Retired Sailors and Retired Marines, and 5,556 (40%) were Retired Airmen.

2) Of the 2,456 annuitants, 1,421 (58%) were surviving spouses of Retired Soldiers, 218 (9%) were surviving spouses of Retired Sailors or Retired Marines, and 817 (33%) were surviving spouses of Retired Airmen.

3) All of these percentages are virtually unchanged from those reflected for the end of FY 2013.

d. Trends:

1) The trend for Retired Service Members residing in USEUCOM area of responsibility over the last ten years shows a slight decrease, ranging between 14,462 in FY04 and 13,853 in FY14.

2) However, there has been a gradual, but steady downward trend since 2010, ranging from 14,362 in FY10 and 13,853 in FY14.

3) The trend for annuitants over the last ten years shows a continuous increase from 2,136 in FY04 to 2,456 in FY14.

4) However, the trend has decreased slightly since 2011, ranging from 2,520 in FY 11 to 2,456 in FY14.

9. Update on Service-level Retiree Council Actions:

a. Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council, SGM (Ret) Stewart. SGM Stewart provided an update on the issues deliberated at the 2014 Chief of Staff Army Retiree Council (CSARC) meeting. Specific areas highlighted were:

1) Of the 22 issues deliberated four have significant interest to the U.S. Army Europe and retirees from the other Europe based Services. This does not lessen the impact of the other issues, however many are still being considered by the agencies responsible.

2) Four issues of special interest to Army retirees and their status/resolution are:

a) Simplify the DFAS Password: Recommendations to simplify the DFAS Password were successful and DFAS has implemented a new policy shrinking the length of the access password.

b) Modification of the 5 Year Rotation Policy for Retired Soldiers and Spouses holding DAC positions. CSARC supported the issue to modify the 5 year Rotation policy for mid and low level DAC employees prohibiting the retention of Retired Soldiers and spouses holding positions as Overseas Hires and appealed to Commanders to review the policy. However, to date there appears to me no movement on the part of many commands to modify the policy for the affected constituency. Those affected by this policy retired in Europe near bases where they have permanently settled and are seeking the same stability of employees in CONUS.

c) Expansion of TRICARE Preferred Providers: TRICARE rejected this proposal by citing cost factors. Recommend the council reconsider this issue with modifications that may make it more plausible to implement.

d) Support change increasing the allowable weight allowance for Retiree APO Retired (R)-Box holders by implementing a test case to determine the cost and impact: DoD has once again rejected the proposal for a test case citing cost factors and various restrictions including host nation objections. USAREUR provided evidence that this is not a SOFA issue. 8th EUSA pointed out that the Republic of Korea (ROK) Government had no objection to the amount of mail departing the Country but did object to any increase in the lifting of the inbound weight restriction for Retiree Box holders to the ROK. CSARC agreed to table the issue until a later date. The ETRC Councils should review and consider submitting a new request with data specifically providing cost data and the anticipated estimate of volume increase.

3) SGM Stewart finished by stating he would like to publicly thank U.S. Army Europe Medical Command for the tremendous effort made to open the TRICARE Plus program to many more retirees. It has been a huge boost for Retired Soldiers and retirees at large.

b. Air Force 2014 Retiree Council review, CMSgt (Ret) Collet:

1) CMSgt Collet also highlighted some of the topics of this year's 39th Air Force Retiree Council (AFRC) meeting and echoed some of SGM Stewart's comments; specifically increasing the TRICARE Preferred Provider network and DFAS' support.

2) Due to budget constraints and TDY funding, the AFRC co-chairs will brief the CSAF in March 2015 vice the normal briefing that occurs in the fall following the meeting.

c. Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council review, CDR (Ret) Brennan:

1) CDR Brennan highlighted results of the Secretary of the Navy Retire Council that occurred in July. He said it was encouraging to see that the Navy and Marine Corps support the initiative to raise the mail limit for retirees overseas to 5 pounds

2) In addition, he stated the ability for retirees to shop at the commissary and navy Exchange in Spain is an on-going issue.

10. Review of Previous ETRC Prioritized Issues

a. Impact of the Affordable Care Act on retired service members overseas. Council members discussed the topic and agreed to close the item. At the time the issue was brought forward, there was uncertainty on how retirees would be covered and whether TRICARE would meet the Affordable Care Act standard. As it now has been discovered it does, there is no further action to take on this issue. However, the ETRC members all agreed for the need to keep a pulse on health care coverage for retirees in the overseas areas as new nuances of the Act become effective. In addition, the ETRC wanted to publicly thank those who helped with the issue for the past 2 years.

b. Expansion of the TRICARE Preferred Provider Network Program. As mentioned during the July ETRC meeting, both SGM Stewart and CMSgt Collet brought this topic forward to their respective Army and Air Force retiree councils as an offshoot from last December's ETRC meeting. The issue stems from European base closures thereby reducing the number of available medical treatment facilities and forcing members to seek host nation providers. This item has been tabled by both the Army and Air Force retiree councils. However, all ETRC members recommended keeping this item open due to the impact it has on retirees in the European community - not only now, but also pending future European Infrastructure Consolidation initiatives.

c. DFAS Support to Military Retiree Overseas.

1) Defense Finance and Accounting Service Retired and Annuity Section (DFAS R&A) previously provided on-scene support to Retiree Appreciation Days both within and outside CONUS. Both retirees and annuitants benefit from this hands-on support. Historically, the

knowledge and expertise of a DFAS technician in resolving pay and benefits issues resulted in quick results, including recouping of funds for clients served by these representatives in the field.

2) DFAS budgets can no longer support sending representatives to all RADs, especially those involving travel outside the U.S. and intra-theater travel between several events, as has been done in the European theater.

3) After collaboration, the ETRC believes this process can be improved and delivered “virtually” at a significant savings. It is being carried as new initiative; reference paragraph 12 below.

d. Military Postal Support to Military Retirees Overseas.

1) This 10+ year issue stems from the 16-ounce incoming and outgoing mail weight restriction for military retirees living overseas using military post offices as imposed by a DoD publication. This issue continues to be of high importance to retirees and ranks among the top priorities following health care and finances.

2) Since the ETRC met last July, the council held two subsequent teleconferences to discuss the issue and attempt to identify possible solutions. Unfortunately, all solutions expend some type of resource. A possible (and probably best) solution was for retirees to pay second-destination charges (the cost from the APO to the overseas location or the reverse.) However that too requires U.S. Postal Service software modifications which would be of a significant cost. Increased mail volume would require more personnel for delivery and an increase in weight would equate to more costs in fuel via ground or air.

3) During the ETRC’s research, they discovered from postal SMEs that some, if not many, military post offices are understaffed. As an example, the Ramstein Post Office is ~30 understaffed based on the application of Air Force manpower standards. This is compounded by the tens of millions the components execute each year for mail delivery and the increased threat of reduced budgets.

4) Exacerbating the issue is the sense from many that if the ETRC and other councils continue to press the topic, it may place retirees at risk of losing all military postal support due to pure frustration.

5) The ETRC agreed to keep the topic open as an unresolved issue.

11. Coordination of New Issues: As in previous years, ETRC members coordinated items being considered for submission to their service-level retiree council.

a. Army in Europe Issues: COL Mentell presented four issues that the Army in Europe Retiree Council is considering for Army in Europe leadership to forward to HQDA for consideration by the CSARC. They are:

1) Training of Retired Soldier Volunteers

a) Situation: With Retirement Services Officer (RSO) spaces going away as garrisons are closed and as enduring garrisons eliminate them due to budget cuts and with RSO "faces" begin given an increasing number of additional duties, 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 or are not current on the details of the programs on which they speak and the limits of what they can and cannot say. The Department of the Army RSO (DA RSO) has established "remote training programs" for RSOs.

b) Recommendation: DA RSO establish a similar "remote training program" for Retired Soldier Volunteers

2) Common Access Cards for Retired Soldiers

a) Situation: The current and ever increasing cyber threats to our automated systems require constant vigilance and increasingly sophisticated security counter measures. The ongoing upgrades to the Army automation systems and most Department of Defense (DOD) systems require users to use common access cards (CACs) vice user identification (User ID) names and passwords for login. This effort insures personal security and greater cyber security for the overall systems. Unfortunately, some of the efforts designed to increase security (CACs) are slowly eroding access to vital systems for retirees. The need for Retired Soldier CAC-access is not an "if" but "when" proposition. It is merely a matter of time until anyone wishing to access any DOD system will require some sort of CAC Card access.

b) Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of issuing common access cards (CACs) to Retirees Soldiers to increase the system cyber security requirements and preclude retiree loss of access to critical systems

3) TRICARE Notifications

a) Situation: Defense Health Agency (DHA) has announced that it is no longer sending paper letters to notify beneficiaries about changes to their coverage and eligibility status. Beneficiaries will now receive emails or post cards directing them to online resources where they can view their information. The two means of notification are: 1) if the beneficiary has a valid email address in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), they will get an

email telling them to go milConnect to read the letter or, 2) if they do not have an email address in DEERS, they will get a post card directing them to milConnect. Without a DS Logon, CAC, or DFAS pin, they will not be able to view their information. Consequently, this change requires all TRICARE beneficiaries to have online capabilities, many of which do not.

b) Recommendation: Encourage DHA to permit beneficiaries without e-mail addresses to opt out of receiving updates only via the DMDC web application "milConnect" and to continue to receive hard-copy notifications.

4) Support for the Soldier for Life Program

a) Situation: The Soldier for Life (SFL) program seeks to inspire Retired Soldier to maintain, embrace, and share their Army experience in a manner that hopefully will strengthen and instill their learned values, ethos, and leadership within their respective communities. The SFL identifies Retired Soldiers as "essential enablers," influencers within their communities and critical to our Army's ability to generate a premier all-volunteer force. Yet, even though the Army identifies Retired Soldiers as "essential enablers," there are many Retired Soldiers who do not know, sense, or speak publically about the important responsibility they continue to bear for our Army and our Nation.

b) Recommendation: Chief of Staff, Army, mentor every retiring GO and CSM to speak publically at their retirement ceremonies about how they aspire to continue serving Soldiers and our Army after retirement.

b. Air Force in Europe issues. At the time of the meeting, HQ Air Force had not sent their "call for topics" message so no official input had been received. However, Chief Collet said the Ramstein/Kaiserslautern Retiree Council had mentioned they may have one or two topics, but they needed to do more research. One topic was related to retiree councils at Joint bases and the other was civil service hiring of retirees/veterans in overseas locations. The "call for topics" message is expected to be received in January with suspense of February.

c. Navy in Europe issues. Similar to the Air Force, the Secretary of the Navy office has not yet sent their "call for topics" message, so topics have been received. CDR Brennan said he expects to see the message in early 2015.

12. Identification of New ETRC Priority Issues and Strategy for Pursuit

a. Training Program for Retired Soldier Volunteers (USAREUR lead).

1) Retirement Services Officers (RSOs) and Retirement Assistance Officers (RAOs) play a vital role in delivering key services to Service Members as they prepare to retire and after they retire. Despite that fact, two things are happening simultaneously: RSO spaces are going away as garrisons close and as enduring garrisons accommodate budget reductions, and RSO

“faces,” i.e., those individuals assigned RSO/RAO duties, are being burdened by an increasing number of additional duties. Therefore, the availability of those key services continues to decrease. At the same time, the size of the Retired Service Member community in Europe is remaining relatively constant.

2) To off-set the downward trend in the supporting-to-supported ratio, Retired Service Members several garrisons/bases have been permitted to create offices generically referred to as Retiree Service Centers in an attempt to “take care of their own.” These offices are staffed exclusively by well-intentioned volunteers. Many of these volunteers, however, lack formal training in the subjects on which they are advising active-duty Service Members and Retired Service Members and their Families and Annuitants.

3) Consequently, many of these Retired Service Member volunteers do not know the details of the program on which they speak and the limits of what they can and cannot say. Nevertheless, they are advising active-duty Service Members and Retired Service Members and their Families and Annuitants.

4) Recommended way ahead: All components submit an issue to their service-level retiree council recommending the establishment of a “remote training program” for Retired Service Member volunteers.

- b. DFAS Support (NAVEUR lead).

1) Defense Finance and Accounting Service Retired and Annuity Section (DFAS R&A) previously provided on-scene support to Retiree Appreciation Days both within and outside CONUS. Both retirees and annuitants benefit from this hands-on support. Historically, the knowledge and expertise of a DFAS technician in resolving pay and benefits issues resulted in quick results, including recoupment of funds for clients served by these representatives in the field.

2) DFAS budgets can no longer support sending representatives to all RADs, especially those involving travel outside the U.S. and intra-theater travel between several events, as has been done in the European theater.

3) While DFAS support is no longer directly available in the field, by leveraging technology, support could still be available to clients at a remote site during a local RAD. DFAS “virtual” support could be provided via a linkage between DFAS in Cleveland and field sites using systems and equipment normally available to an RSO/RAO.

4) By conducting “virtual” face-to-face meetings with the assistance of the local RSO/RAO staff, a secondary benefit would be enhanced exposure of RSO/RAO personnel to DFAS expertise and methodology, improving their day-to-day ability to serve the needs of

clients. One final benefit of such a system is the potential for the supporting DFAS technician to call on expertise from other sections of the DFAS R&A organization, enhancing their ability to respond to client needs.

5) There would need to be adjustments to DFAS personnel shifts to accommodate the needs of a RAD being conducted several time zones away from Cleveland. This adjustment should be much easier to accommodate than the need to release a technician from their duties for a number of days, as was done in the past.

6) Recommended way-ahead:

a) Coordinate with DFAS to define the level and type of support routinely provided by deployed DFAS personnel at RADs. Set baseline standards that would be required to be met by the virtual support system.

b) Investigate systems and technology already available to RSO/RAO offices that would allow DFAS to provide the required level of support to clients at RADs by connecting in-house personnel with the client in the field. Such technology should:

i. Allow DFAS personnel to conduct a “virtual” one-on-one session with the client through use of Video Teleconferencing, Video telephony, or other readily available technology.

ii. Allow scanning, display, and transmission of documents via Facsimile or other imaging systems. This allows clients in the field to complete/sign necessary hardcopy documents or authorizations, and transmit them to DFAS in near real-time, as well as allowing DFAS personnel to provide hardcopy feedback of the results of their work for the client’s personal records.

iii. Coordination by DFAS with Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) would be required to ensure that the systems used comply with security standards, as well as compliance with standards for protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

c. Common Access Cards for Retired Service Members (USAREUR Lead)

1) This issue is based on USAREUR’s 2015 recommendation to CSARC shown above in paragraph 11, a, 2). As stated previously, due to increased cyber threats to automated systems, the ETRC believes issuing CACs to retirees would greatly mitigate the cyber risk caused by use of username/password (single-factor) authentication.

2) ETRC members realize this issue may be cost prohibitive; however, with advocacy, it believes will begin the conversation and possibly result in forecasting the requirement through the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) system for possible Future Year Defense Program (FYDP) implementation.

3) Recommended way ahead: Each component should submit an issue to their service-level retiree council recommending that all necessary actions be taken to phase in the issuance of Common Access Cards to future Retired Service Members to increase the system cyber security and to permit them to retain access to key information and to critical systems.

d. Expansion of the TRICARE Preferred Provider Network Program (All).

1) This issue is based on the ETRC issue prioritized in December 2014 shown above in paragraph 10b.

2) Recommended way ahead: All council members agreed to monitor the availability of medical care to Retired Services members either through military treatment facilities or host nation treatment facilities. The issue will be reviewed at the Spring 2015 ETRC meeting.

e. Military Postal Support to Military Retirees Overseas (All).

1) This issue is based on ETRC issue prioritized in December 2014 shown above in paragraph 10d.

2) Recommend way ahead. All council members agreed to monitor the situation. This issue will be reviewed at the Spring 2015 ETRC meeting.

13. Closing Remarks:

a. CMSgt Collet thanked everyone for their continued support to the retiree community. He also thanked the local USAREUR/G1 staff for hosting and their support in allowing the ETRC to hold the meeting on such short notice.

b. As the ETRC chair rotates annually, this was Chief Collet's last meeting as chair; next ETRC will be chaired by Navy.

14. Next Meeting: The next meeting is anticipated to be via VTC/Telecon in the June-July timeframe; however, a firm date is yet to be determined.

15. Adjournment: CMSgt Collet adjourned the meeting at 1330.

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Chair