



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

AEPE-AERSC

8 November 2018

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

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retired Soldier Council Meeting

1. The 148th meeting of the Army in Europe Retired Soldier Council (AERSC) convened on 26 October 2018 at 0900 in the G1 conference room, Clay Kaserne. The first meeting of the council was 29 August 1980.

2. The following persons were present:

(a) Members:

LTC (Ret) David Fulton	President
CW3 (Ret) Sandra K. Simpson	Secretary
COL (Ret) Karl Goetzke	Member
COL (Ret) Christopher Benson	Member
COL (Ret) Robert Mentell	Member
SGM (Ret) Michael Richter	Member
SGM (Ret) David Stewart	Member

(b) Advisory Members:

COL Matthew Rasmussen	DCS, G1
Mr. Ed Francis	USAREUR G1 Policy
Mr. Mario Mena	IMCOM Europe
Mr. Stacey Hendrix	IMCOM Europe, RSO

(c) Visitor:

MG John Gronski	USAREUR DCG for National Guard
Mr. Mark Overberg	Soldier for Life

3. Opening Remarks: (LTC Fulton). LTC Fulton welcomed the members and began the discussion by sharing information concerning events since the last meeting of the Council.

(a) The 2019 Dental and Vision rates have been published and can be viewed at the FEDVIP website, <https://tricare.benefeds.com/InfoPortal/indexAction>.

(b) The 2019 COLA rate has been set at 2.8%.

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(c) The Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC) report was reviewed by the Chief of Staff, and a copy was distributed to the council members.

(d) The minutes of the August AERSC were published and have been electronically distributed. COL Goetzke will continue to follow up with the Battlefield Monuments Commission concerning an exception to policy to permit burial of veterans in exceptional cases.

(e) The U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) continues to seek Retired Soldiers to support their recruiting efforts by signing up to become community partners with USAREC. LTC Fulton informed the Council he has personally signed up with USAREC to support and monitor its effectiveness. LTC Fulton has not been contacted by local recruiters to support recruiting efforts.

(f) The 2018 Retirement Planning Guide and the Retired Soldier Handbook have been published.

(g) A new Department of the Army Civilian Recognition Pin was unveiled at the AUSA Annual Meeting. There are three versions of the pin: bronze and silver for completion of one and ten years of service respectively, and gold upon retirement from government service.

(h) The Council continues to work with USAREUR PAO and IMCOM-Europe Retirement Services Office (RSO) in order to resolve the USAREUR homepage to ensure resources for Retired Soldiers are accessible.

(i) The Council has identified two USAREUR issues for potential elevation to the CSARSC. The issue papers, which relate to Retirement Overseas and Enhancements to the Voluntary Management Information System (VMIS), will be refined during the month of November and submitted in December to the Army G1 along with any other CSARSC issue received and validated.

4. Visitor: MG John Gronski, USAREUR DCG for National Guard

(a) LTC Fulton explained the Council mission to MG Gronski stating that the Council functions as a part of the USAREUR G1 staff to provide policy oversight for matters affecting Retired Soldiers and their Family members.

(b) MG Gronski stated he intends to retire in 2019. His retirement processing is unique as the National Guard does their processing differently than the active duty Army.

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(c) MG Gronski thanked the Council for their continued service. He indicated that he plans to continue working after retiring and looks forward to exemplifying the meaning of being a Soldier for Life.

5. DCS, G1 Report (COL Rasmussen)

(a) COL Rasmussen stated that he anticipates the USAREUR G1 will now remain an O6 authorization instead of an SES.

(b) The G1 intends to resource four AERSC meetings in FY19. There is on-going discussion between COL Rasmussen and the AERSC President to include an off-site visit to Point Alpha during one of these meetings.

(c) USAREUR has just finished Exercise Austere Challenge. This exercise served as preparation for a follow-on exercise in March when USAREUR HQ will function as a Joint Forces Land Component Command (JFLCC). The Army focus is now moving to "All Things Europe" which will endeavor to bring Europe to an increased state of readiness in support of various plans to deter aggression.

(d) There is on-going discussion concerning the mandated rotation of Department of the Army Civilians (DAC) who are serving overseas. A concern raised by multiple council members is the fact that finding volunteers to serve on local Retired Soldier Councils, or finding Retirees with the experience, for example, to help a widow/widower with casualty assistance matters is difficult given the current management of DACs. LTG Cavoli has discussed civilian tour management policy with senior Army leaders in an effort to ensure USAREUR retains the flexibility to recruit and retain DA and DOD civilian members. COL Rasmussen stated that consensus is required from all services to change existing DOD instructions. At the present time, USAREUR is reviewing each DAC extension on a case by case basis. The main criterion is the individual must be essential to mission readiness. In some cases, compassionate factors may also be considered.

6. IMCOM-Europe Update (Mr. Mena)

(a) Attendance by the Federal Benefits Unit (FBU) has been an issue this year during AE RADs. The FBU choice is that RADs occur either earlier or later in the year due to funding issues around the beginning of the FY in October. LTC Bergman stated that the FBU has not been able to assist with the Benelux RAD for many years. A suggestion was made to ask the FBU in Dublin, which oversees and supports the Benelux, of tentative dates for a possible supplemental Retiree event in the Benelux.

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(b) Given a recent update to an Army in Europe Regulation concerning individual logistical support to Retired Soldiers, there was concern that medically Retired Soldiers may have lost their privileges to a postal R-Box. Mr. Mena will research the change,

specifically seeking to ensure medically Retired Soldiers with less than 20 years of service remain eligible for R-Box privileges. Veterans who are 100% disabled but not retired are no longer eligible for this privilege.

7. Soldier for Life Office Update (Mr. Overberg)

(a) Mr. Overberg's office publishes the "Army Retirement Planning Guide," the 2019 version is now available at <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/preparing-to-retire>. Additionally, published the "2019 Retired Soldier Handbook" available at <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/after-retirement>. A new publication aimed at Soldiers with 17 years of service is called "Change of Mission," will be delivered electronically each quarter by using the email associated with their MyPay account.

(b) Mr. Overberg provided council members with a virtual tour of the Army's Retirement Services website. All council members gained an appreciation for the great work being done at the Army level to make information and resources readily available to Retired Soldiers and their Families.

8. Way Ahead: (LTC Fulton)

(a) LTC Fulton reviews AE RAD and all RAD AARs and shares lessons learned.

(b) Continue to work with USAREUR PAO and IMCOM-Europe RSO to improve access to website resources and programs.

(c) Continue to disseminate information on the FEDVIP Open Season from 12 Nov-10 Dec 18, as it becomes available.

(d) Coordinate with EUCOM J1 to host the European Tri-Component Retiree Council Meeting in Stuttgart.

(e) Continue planning for the 149th AERSC Meeting (May 2019)

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9. The meeting adjourned at 1500.



MATTHEW F. RASMUSSEN
COL, GS
DCS, G1, Representative



DAVID V. FULTON
LTC, USA (Retired)
President, AERSC