



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

AEPE-AERSC

15 March 2019

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 149th meeting of the Army in Europe Retired Soldier Council (AERSC) convened on 7 February 2019 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) Robert Mentell	Member
LTC (Ret) William Bergman	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. David Hicks	USAREUR G1 Policy
Mr. Stacey Hendrix	IMCOM Europe, RSO

c. Visitors:

COL Gail Curley	USAREUR SJA
Ms. Mary Cheney	USAG Wiesbaden Volunteer Program Coordinator

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

a. Council members reviewed after action review (AAR) comments consolidated by the IMCOM-Europe RSO. These AAR comments addressed all Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) events and are helpful in planning future RADs.

b. The Federal Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP) Open Season, which offered

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the opportunity for Retirees to choose a new dental and vision plan, closed in December 2018. The next open season will be November 2019.

c. "Change of Mission" is a HQDA Soldier for Life quarterly publication intended to educate Soldiers having 17 or more years of service on the issues and complexities of retirement. The second edition was published in January 2019. Soldiers receive the publication via email at the email address they have registered in MyPay. It can also be found online at: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/change-of-mission>.

d. USAREUR G1 completed the FY19 Manager's Internal Control Program (MICP) for Army Europe Supplement 1 to AR 600-8-7.

e. The AERSC President hosted a meeting with the 1SG of the European Recruiting Station, and gave him and local recruiters a tour of the USAREUR Museum Gallery. Given the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) initiative that asks Retired Soldiers to join their Partnership Outreach Program, the AERSC President's intent for this meeting was to lay the groundwork for supporting our local recruiters in their recruiting efforts. The USAREUR Museum Gallery presents a unique venue for recruiters to conduct an enlistment ceremony for recruits and their Families.

f. Retirees received a COLA increase on 1 January 2019.

g. COL Karl Goetzke was selected to serve as a Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC) Member. Members serve a maximum term of four years on the CSARSC. It was noted during the CSARSC discussion that 55% of Retired Soldiers residing overseas reside in the EUCOM footprint. This significant presence of Retired Soldiers within Europe readily lends to the influence and impact that the AERSC, and consequently, the European CSARSC representative have in addressing overseas Retired Soldier issues for our Army.

h. USAREUR submitted two Retired Soldier issues for consideration at this year's CSARSC meeting, both issues were accepted. The first issue requests IMCOM makes changes to the Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS) to allow volunteers to register themselves within the VMIS system in all statuses that apply to them (i.e., retired Soldier, Family member, Department of the Army Civilian). Currently, VMIS only permits a volunteer to register in the system using one status. The second issue requests the HQDA Soldier for Life website consolidate and publish general, area specific information to educate Retired Soldiers on unique considerations they will likely face when retiring overseas (host nation taxes, vehicle registration, etc.).

4. Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) Notes (LTC Fulton and Mr. Hendrix):

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a. The overall feedback from the RADs reflected significant retiree Soldier, and those in attendance, appreciation for the providers and services made available.

b. The Federal Benefits Unit (FBU) is seen as a key service provider for Retired Soldiers at RADs. Yet, the supporting FBUs for Grafenwoehr, Ansbach, Schinnen and SHAPE again failed to attend those specific RADs. The AERSC requested IMCOM-Europe engage with the FBU offices in Frankfurt and Dublin now to solidify their support for our October 2019 RADs.

5. Veterans Administration (VA) Update:

a. The VA has committed to assist with funding for the dignified burial of unclaimed veteran remains in VA national and VA-grant funded State and Tribal Veterans cemeteries. The maximum allowable reimbursement in calendar year 2019 is \$2,681 for a casket and \$162 for an urn. It was noted by the Council that this issue of how to best address and support the dignified burial of unclaimed veterans' remains was discussed at the AERSC's meeting during Spring 2018. In the interim, organizations such as Army Emergency Relief, and now VA, have outlined their policies to address this issue.

b. Several additional countries have been added to the compensation examinations contract currently serviced by the Veterans Evaluation Services (VES). Expanding the VES is one of VA's modernization efforts allowing the VA to increase a veteran's accessibility to timely compensation and pension examinations. The new countries added to the VES examination contract include Bahrain, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland and Dominican Republic.

6. Retired Soldiers and Annuitant Demographics (COL Mentell):

a. COL Mentell briefed the Council on the updated demographics for military Retirees and Annuitants residing in Europe. The data for this demographic information is from the DOD Actuary. As of 30 September 2018, there are 13,974 Retired Soldiers in the Army in Europe footprint. Included in this population are 4,771 (34.1%) Retirees over the age of 65. There are also an additional 2,391 military Annuitants in the Army in Europe footprint, of which 1,945 (81.3) are over the age of 65.

b. COL Mentell concluded that almost 95% of retired military residing outside the continental United States are located in Europe and approximately 55% of these Retired Soldiers are residing in Germany. Almost 100% of the military Annuitants residing OCONUS are in Europe and over 50% are in Germany. The "So What" in these statistics is found in the significant and critical role the AERSC has in addressing, elevating and influencing issues affecting Retired Soldiers and Annuitants residing OCONUS.

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7. Volunteer Hours (COL Mentell): During CY 2018, AERSC members reported 2,049 hours of volunteer service.

8. Retirement Services Website (LTC Fulton, SGM Stewart, Mr. Hendrix): Changes to the IMCOM-Europe and USAREUR homepages are ongoing. These homepages impact how and where our Retired Soldier population finds information concerning Retired Soldiers services. The Council has committed to work with IMCOM-Europe to review the webpages, with the goal of resolving gaps and reducing complexity of finding information. The intent is to have the IMCOM-Europe Retirement Services website fully updated by 1 October 2019.

9. DCS, G1 Report (COL Rasmussen):

a. COL Rasmussen provided an update pertaining to G1 leadership, which included news on the recruitment for a G1 civilian deputy and confirmation USAREUR G1 will remain an O6 billet.

b. The G1 provided a brief update on rotational units coming to Europe to support operations in Poland and elsewhere.

c. MG Gronksi, the Deputy Commanding General for National Guard Affairs, is retiring Spring 2019. His replacement is MG Joe Jarrard, who most recently served as the 42nd Adjutant General for the Georgia Department of Defense.

10. IMCOM-Europe Update (Mr. Hendrix): Provided an updated listing of RSOs and the 2019 RAD schedule.

USAG RSOs in Europe

IMCOM-Europe Directorate	Mr. Stacy Hendrix
USAG Ansbach	Mr. Marcus Ufeanyui
USAG Bavaria	Ms. Jacinta Lewis-Berrien
USAG Benelux/Brussels	Mr. Anthony Zachary
Site Schinnen	Mr. Ronald Macauley
Kaiserslautern/Ramstein/Baumholder	Mr. Finnie Richardson/Mr. Daniel Washington
USAG Italy	Ms. Tamela Hushen
USAG Stuttgart	Mr. Augustus Norvel
USAG Wiesbaden	Ms. Lisa Hicks

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2019 RAD Schedule for Europe

11 October: USAG Italy	Golden Lion Conference Center, Building 311 (0800-1300)
15 October: USAG Bavaria	Multi-Purpose Center (0800-1400)
16 October: USAG Ansbach	Building 5845 Von Steuben Community Center on Bismarck (0800-1400)
17 October: USAG Stuttgart	Building 2505 Swabian Special Events Center Patch Barracks (0800-1400)
18 October: Site Schinnen	Building 39 Community Events Center (0930-1400)
19 October: USAG Benelux/Brussels	Building 401 SHAPE Medical Clinic (0800-1200)
22 October: USAG Rheinland-Pfalz/Ramstein	Ramstein Officers Club ((0800-1400) ,
28 October: USAG Wiesbaden/Army in Europe RAD	Building 1000 Mission Command Center (0800-1400)

11. Special Guest Briefer: (Ms. Mary Cheney, Installation Volunteer Coordinator, USAG Wiesbaden):

a. USAG Wiesbaden is currently working to place a volunteer in each of the garrison directorates. The intent of this initiative is to provide unique opportunities to volunteers, plus needed support and experience in offices that are often undermanned.

b. The Council asked if the Garrison can, or will, offer incentives or logistical support to volunteers. It was noted that volunteers can be issued a CAC for the purpose of working on government automation. It was also noted that volunteers can be reimbursed for travel costs in some cases and when orders are provided. Ms. Cheney stated that the idea of offering limited logistical support to community volunteers who serve a specified number of hours was also submitted as an issue to the Wiesbaden Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) a few years ago. At that time, the issue was not forwarded higher in the AFAP process. The Council indicated its willingness to assist in potentially re-submitting the issue via AFAP and/or Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC) channels as well.

12. Special Guest Briefer: (COL Gail Curley, USAREUR Staff Judge Advocate (SJA)):

a. COL Curley opened her presentation with a discussion on the USAREUR Tax Program.

(1) Given a reduction in funding and Borrowed Military Manpower, tax centers

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across USAREUR will adhere to the limitations under the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and Army Regulation 27-3. This means only those individuals who generally make \$54,000 or less will receive tax support from our tax centers.

(2) COL Curley acknowledged the Council's concern that there are likely older Annuitants with limited English speaking ability who may need tax assistance. COL Curley has alerted the tax centers to this unique population and she indicated the tax centers stand ready to support those Retirees and Annuitants eligible for VITA.

(3) COL Curley, after a request from the council, acknowledged that using Retired Soldier volunteers would be possible and agreed to coordinate with Ms. Cheney in identifying potential volunteers with the expertise and willingness to support our tax centers.

b. COL Curley was made aware there is a Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) due on 15 April 2019. This report must be completed and electronically filed by any US citizen who has over \$10,000 in one or more foreign banks during the previous year. The report is sent directly to the US treasury, not linked to income tax. The Council voiced the need to both the IMCOM-Europe RSO and the SJA that the online reporting requirement may become an issue with older Retired Soldiers and/or annuitants who are not computer literate. Additional guidance on the FBAR can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/report-of-foreign-bank-and-financial-accounts-fbar>

13. Way Ahead: (LTC Fulton). The following initiatives and events will require AERSC focus for the next three months:

- a. Improvement of the Retirement Services website.
- b. Support to the CSARSC (28-April to 3 May 2019).
- c. Planning for the 150th Meeting of the AERSC. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for 23 May 2019.
- d. Recognition of our Retired Soldier Volunteers in coordination with community Volunteer Recognition Ceremonies.

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14. The meeting adjourned at 1500.



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



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