



**INSTALLATION SOLDIER FOR LIFE RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL  
FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY 40121**

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
26 October 2019**

The Fort Knox Soldier for Life Retiree Council was called to order at 0900 hours, Saturday, 26 October 2019 in the DHR, Graham Hall, conference room by BG (Ret) Charles D. Estes, Chair, who presided.

The following attendance for the Retiree Council meeting was as follows:

Voting council members present:

Charles D. Estes, BG (Ret), USA, Chair  
Rodney J. Newell, CSM (Ret), USA, Vice-Chair  
Belinda Gaither-Schmitt, SFC (Ret), USA, Secretary  
Jackie A. Ash, CSM (Ret), USA  
Franklin T. Brady, CSM (Ret), USA  
Thomas C. Cunningham, LTC (Ret) USA  
John DeReu, LTC (Ret), USA  
Douglas E. Frecker, CW3 (Ret), USA  
Kevin F. Gregory, COL (Ret), USA  
Thomas A. Goff, CW5 (Ret), USA  
Donavan J. Mahuron, MSG (Ret), USA

Non-voting members present:

Randy J. Gasser, CPO (Ret), USN  
Glenda Nicol, MSG (Ret), USA  
Sherman Nicol, SGM (Ret), USA  
Michael Pesko, Jr., MAJ (Ret), USA  
Georgie Sharp, CPL (Ret), USMC  
Richard C. Ward, MAJ (Ret), USA  
Mrs. Cathy Williamson, Volunteer

Voting members absent:

Russell D. Gold, COL (Ret), USA  
Irvin Lyons, Jr., SGM (Ret), USA

Non-voting members absent:

Drew M. Brandt, LTC (Ret), USA  
William L. Lamont, LTC (Ret), USA

Non-voting council advisory members present:

Mrs. Jolene Culpepper, Civ, RSO/Chief/TC  
Mr. Shawn Pollack, Civ, DHR AG

Distinguished Guest:

Mr. Emmet Holley, Ft. Knox Dep Garrison CDR

The Chair led the attendees into The Pledge of Allegiance and began the meeting.

**New Council Members**

BG (Ret) Estes welcomed new member COL (Ret) Gregory to the Retiree Council. After the two nominated members left the room, BG (Ret) Estes asked LTC (Ret) Cunningham and MSG (Ret) Mahuron to provide a quick introduction of 1SG (Ret) Harold Dawson and CW4 (Ret) David Shearer respectively. A motion to vote the nominated members into the Retiree Council was made and nominated members were voted into the Retiree Council. In addition, LTC (Ret) Cunningham, reported that as replacement for MSG (Ret) Nicol, CW3 (Ret) Frecker was voted in as the new Chair for the Ohio Retiree Council.

**State reports:**

Ohio: CW3 (Ret) Frecker started his comments by telling the Retiree Council about the increase in members and that the leadership of the Ohio Council is now considering monthly meetings. The main objective of monthly meetings is to improve camaraderie and to keep up with other Veteran Organizations. One of the goals of the Ohio Council is to organize a RAD to ensure information is distributed to Veterans throughout the State. In addition, LTC (Ret) Cunningham is continuously striving to keep the Facebook page up to date and the numbers are increasing. He is also considering the incorporation of Twitter and Instagram to reach more Retired/Retiring Veterans. His work on providing medical equipment to needing Veterans is pertinent and reaches beyond the Ohio borders. SGM (Ret) Nicol passed out information pamphlets of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum located in Columbus, Ohio.

Indiana: MSG (Ret) Mahuron comments included that the Indiana Retiree Alumni had their annual meeting in August and then met several times afterwards to finish their booklet on retiree's issues and benefits. He passed out the booklet to all attendees. MSG (Ret) Mahuron's continuous effort to distribute the Retiree Council pamphlets resulted in the largest increase of Facebook members within the five States.

Illinois: LTC (Ret) DeReu discussed several legal concerns involving Federal and State, to include the widow's tax issue and the Guard/Reserve retirement credit. CSM (Ret) Newell commended on the Guard/Reserve issue and BG (Ret) Estes countered that no credit was given to Guard/Reserves prior to Jan 2008 for their service under certain orders. Another point LTC (Ret) DeReu mentioned on his comments was the ongoing uncertainty of the DECA and Exchange merger. CSM (Ret) Brady provided information on four outreach program events in the Illinois area.

Kentucky: BG (Ret) Estes mentioned two Veterans Day events, one smaller event in Vine Grove, KY and another event in Louisville, KY. MAJ (Ret) Pesko discussed patrons of the Commissary are finding expired items and should bring that to the attention of the customer service desk and not the cashiers. In addition, he mentioned that there was an issue about patrons with KY Handicapped license plates parking in Handicapped parking spots at the Commissary and the PX. After some research, those patrons are authorized to park in the handicapped parking spots.

West Virginia: CW5 (Ret) Goff's comments included items from a West Virginia Department of Veteran's Assistance meeting he attended, but pointed out that these comments have not been made public. The main issue was the homicide investigation concerning the Clarksburg VA Hospital where a person is accused of causing Insulin overdoses in VA Patients. Other comments included the issue that the DAV has with their program transporting veterans to the VA hospital, and how expensive the nursing facilities in Clarksburg are. CW5 (Ret) Goff continued with the West Virginia council minutes and stated that the

council is growing, a charter is being developed, and a State RAD is planned for spring 2020. Another issue is the way the State is divided when it comes to Area of Responsibility (AOR) between Fort Belvoir and Fort Knox. At the end of his comments, CW5 (Ret) Goff mentioned a Charter conflict between the Army Regulation and the Fort Knox Charter in reference to Grey Area Retirees and their eligibility to serve in the Retiree Council. A motion was passed to authorize Grey Area Retirees into the Retiree Council (except for the position of Chair and Co-Chair).

The Chair called for a short break.

### **Budget Constrains**

Mr. Pollack, Director Human Resources, started his comments with the fact that Fort Knox has the largest retirement population within the US Army. He continued with the dilemma of budget cuts and that the funding (mileage, rooms, and incidentals) for four meetings for voting members will be limited in the future. He acknowledged that some of the voting members have significant distance to drive to attend the council meetings and it would not be fair not to compensate them for their travel.

Mr. Pollack asked the council members to consider a couple of questions:

1. What is the value of having to pay members travel?
2. What is the impact if the members are not funded?
3. What are some possible Courses of Action for this issue?

Several council members commented that they find it important to remain with four meetings. Not only will a reduction in meetings influence the effectiveness of the Fort Knox Retiree Council, but would also affect the camaraderie of its members. CSM (Ret) Newell thought that a reduction in meetings would cause a negative impact on the Retiree Council and that it would be hard to hold things together. BG (Ret) Estes commented that a possible solution may be to cut down to three in person meetings a year (Apr, Jul, Oct) and maybe meet via VTC for the January meeting. LTC (Ret) Cunningham mentioned that he would come to the meetings, even if he is not compensated. However, Mr. Pollack opposed that idea, especially since LTC (Ret) Cunningham was the council member with the furthest distance. SGM (Ret) Nicol introduced the idea of cost sharing, where council members would pay for their travel/incidentals and DHR would cover the cost for lodging. Mr. Holley mentioned that this is not just a Fort Knox problem, but that there is an Army wide shortage. Money is being shifted and programs like the Retiree Council are on the low end.

In conclusion, of this issue BG (Ret) Estes requested that council members email him their thoughts and answers to Mr. Pollack's questions by 30 November 2019.

### **Volunteer Program**

Next, BG (Ret) Estes talked about the requirement for all council members to document their volunteer hours. Starting October 2019, council members have to record the hours of their volunteer work in regards to the Retiree Council on a DA Form 4713. Council members will submit the form to the Secretary quarterly for processing into the VMIS. In addition, council members who had not completed the DD Form 2793 and their Fort Knox Volunteer Position Description were asked to do so prior to departing the area. Council Members were provided with a blank DA Form 4713 for their records.

### **CSA Retiree Issues**

BG (Ret) Estes asked the council members to consider possible questions and concerns, which can be submitted to the CSA Council for 2020.

### **Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) 2019**

Mr. Holley started with the RAD comments by telling the council members about the great work they done at the RAD. He was impressed by the tremendous effort of keeping veterans informed and taking care of veterans during this event. He specifically pointed out that no other service has Retirement Service Officer's and that several Air Force and Navy veterans made comments to him that they genuinely appreciate the information from the vendors and service organizations. The next point was specifically about widowed spouses and the issue that they are neglected by system that is designed to help veterans and their spouses. Many are unaware of entitlements they could receive after their Veteran has passed away. He concluded by stating that Mrs. Culpepper has done, as she does every year, an excellent job in preparing, setting up, and conducting this annual event.

Next, Mrs. Culpepper distributed the dates of the next scheduled council meetings and the dates for the next RAD. She then went ahead and led the council into the After Action Review (AAR), by providing the council members with the first analysis from the RAD conducted on Friday, 25 October 2019. The completed AAR will be published IAW with all applicable regulations.

BG (Ret) Estes closed the discussion and adjourned the meeting at 1120n hours, Saturday, 26 October 2019.

/s/ Belinda Gaither-Schmitt  
BELINDA GAITHER-SCHMITT  
SFC (RET), USA  
Secretary, Retiree Council

/s/ Charles D. Estes  
CHARLES D. ESTES  
BG (Ret), USA  
Chair, Retiree Council