



## **FORT KNOX RETIREE COUNCIL**

**19 April 2024**

The Fort Knox Retiree Council was called to order at 0900 hours, Friday, 19 April 2024 in the DHR Conference Room by BG (Ret) Charles D. Estes, Chair, who presided.

BG (Ret) Estes led the attendees into The Pledge of Allegiance and began the meeting with a roll call of Retiree Council members:

Voting members present:

Charles D. Estes, BG (Ret), USA, Chair  
Rodney J. Newell, CSM (Ret), USA, Vice-Chair (via phone)  
Jackie A. Ash, CSM (Ret), USA  
Franklin T. Brady, CSM (Ret), USA (via phone)  
Belinda Gaither-Schmitt, SFC (Ret), USA, Secretary  
Bernard Hayes, MAJ, (Ret), USA  
Michael Pesko, Jr., MAJ (Ret), USA

Voting members absent:

Betsy Brocklehurst, MSgt (Ret), USAF  
Darren W. Hargrove, SGM (Ret), USA

Non-voting members absent:

Thomas C. Cunningham, LTC (Ret) USA  
Harold Denson, 1SG (Ret), USA  
Glenda Nicol, MSG (Ret), USA  
Thomas A. Goff, CW5 (Ret), USA  
Georgie Sharp, CPL (Ret), USMC  
David Shearer, CW4 (Ret), USA  
Richard C. Ward, MAJ (Ret), USA  
Irvin Lyons, SGM (Ret), USA  
Mrs. Cathy Williamson, Volunteer

Garrison Command:

Mr. Jim Bradford, Deputy Garrison Commander

Non-voting council advisory members present:

Mr. Kevin Corbin, Civ, DHR/AG

Mrs. Gail Harding, DHR, RSO

BG (Ret) Estes informed the members that LTC (Ret) Lamont passed away and that 1SG (Ret) Culpepper moved away and is no longer a member of the Fort Knox Retiree Council. In addition, he asked CSM (Ret) Brady to find a replacement for CW2 (Ret) Lopez.

**State reports:**

**Ohio:**

CSM (Ret) Newell stated that he met with Retirees in Ohio to inquire about what their needs are and how we could support them. He continued by saying that LTC (Ret) Cunningham is still moving medical equipment to veterans in need.

**Indiana:**

The Indiana State Legislature passed the following:

1. House Bill 1021: Defines "veteran at risk". Creates the green alert program to provide public notification regarding missing veterans at risk. Public Law 40.
2. Senate Bill 49: Provides that catastrophically disabled veterans may hunt on the same day as those designated for youth hunters by the director of the DNR. Defines "catastrophically disabled". Public Law 12.
3. Senate Bill 15: Requires the Indiana Department of Labor consult with the Indiana Department of Veterans affairs to create and distribute a veteran benefits and services poster, and that this poster must contain certain information. Requires that employers with more than 50 full-time display this poster in a conspicuous place. Public Law 96.
4. Senate Bill 39: Hunting season for qualified veterans - referred to committee.
5. House Bill 1038: Property tax exemption for qualified veterans - referred to committee.
6. House Bill 1149: Assessed value deduction for disabled veterans - same as above.
7. Houe Bill 1152: Assessed value deductions for disabled veterans - same as above.

**Illinois:**

1. The Friends of the 85th Division will conduct a luncheon on Thursday, April.18.2024. They have selected two special guests: MG James Mukoyama (Ret) - he served in the 85th, and culminating as the Deputy CG, US Army Reserves at TRADOC, and speaker Ray Striplinger, who is the Ambassador-at-Large for the Hines VA. He will discuss the Fisher House, which is for military families as Ronald McDonald House is to the public. A new Fisher House is coming to the VA Great Lakes Health Care Center soon.
2. Senate Bill 3479: Claims Shark Act passed the Senate 55 to 0.

**Kentucky:**

1. House Bill 30: Creates a new section to establish the Kentucky Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Suicide Prevention Program.
2. There is still no Optometry Service at the Fort Knox CPOC.

### **RAD 2024:**

Mr. Corbin informed the Council that the RAD will be in Sadowski Hall on 18 October 2024. BG (Ret) Estes agreed and stated that only the Commanding General, the Garrison Commander, and the Clinic Commander should have a speaking role, other organizations can have their briefings at their tables.

Mr. Corbin then stated that due to limited funding, the Retiree Council should do their own solicitation in their communities to ask for funding or gift certificates. The intent is to have door prizes for the first time. In addition, the DHR is planning on having some food trucks outside Sadowski for lunchtime.

The DHR will provide the signs and handouts but will not be able to do any solicitation to fund snacks or drinks. The DHR will also contact all the vendors and organizations that usually participate in the RAD.

The OPORD for the RAD is ready for distribution.

### **Garrison Command:**

Mr. Bradford informed the Retiree Council that the VA is planning for a new CPOC in Elizabethtown.

### **Chief of Staff issues:**

BG (Ret) Estes asked the Retiree Council members for recommendation to the Chief of Staff. Two issues were brought up:

1. Request to increase the funding of the Retiree Council. Members from Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and West Virginia have 4 – 8 hours of travel time one way and without having the funding for lodging and mileage most members are unable to make the trip. Mr. Corbin informed BG (Ret) Estes that for 2 voting members per State it would cost \$300 for lodging and meals, and \$0.67 per mile. BG (Ret) Estes asked the Retiree Council members to also check with their State TAGs if they can help with the funding. BG (Ret) Estes asked the Retiree Council members to also check with their State if they can help with the travel funding.

2. Request for Optometry and Audiology Support at the CPOC Fort Knox.

BG (Ret) Estes adjourned the meeting at 1000 hours, Friday, 19 April 2024. The next meeting will be at 0900 on 19 July 2024.

/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