



FORT POLK RETIREE COUNCIL
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5302
TELEPHONE: (337) 531-0363



IMWE-POL-HR-OR

12 September 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 12 September 2007

1. The Fort Polk Retiree Council met on 12 September 2007 at the Education Center/Library, Room 101 in Building 660. The meeting was called to order at 0900 hours by the Chairman. The invocation was given by MSG (R) Clark. The Pledge of Allegiance was then led by SFC (R) Horn.

2. The following is the attendance record for the meeting:

Council Members:

COL (R) Harry J. Montgomery - Present
COL (R) Ronald R. Thompson - Present
LTC (R) Lessie A. Griffith - Present
LTC (R) Stephen C. Gibson - Present
MAJ (R) Charles E. Saucier - Present
MAJ (R) Alvie Brewer - Present
CW5 (R) Mervin J. LeBlanc - Present
SMA (R) Julius W. Gates - Present
CSM (R) Carl C. Henderson - Absent
SGM (R) Anthony L. Barattini - Present
MSG (R) Rudolph Bourg - Absent
MSG (R) Lathern P. Clark - Present
MSG (R) George Burrell - Present
SFC (R) Dan M. Horn - Present
SFC (R) Lovelace Williams - Present
SFC (R) Stephen D. Humphries - Absent
SFC (R) T.J. Shelton - Present

Honorary Council Members Attending:

COL (R) Norman A. Keith
MAJ (R) George C. Thompson
CSM (R) James C. Myrick
CSM (R) Vernon Ware
1SG (R) Dan Esquivel

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Non-Members Attending:

COL David G. Sage, Garrison Commander, Fort Polk, LA

COL Gwendolyn Lemaire, BJACH Acting Commander

CPT Dain Brooks, Chief of Ophthalmology, Fort Polk, LA

CSM Rory Malloy, Post Command Sergeant Major, Fort Polk, LA

CSM Kevin Sharkey, Garrison Command Sergeant Major, Fort Polk, LA

Mrs. Gail Braley, Chief of Personnel Operations Division, Fort Polk, LA

Mr. Christopher Stevenson, Health Benefits Advisor

Mr. Michael Lanham, Fort Polk AAFES General Manager

Mrs. Barbara Watkins, Director, VA Hospital, Alexandria, LA

Mr. Eddie Wise, Director, Vernon Parish Chamber of Commerce, Leesville, LA

Mrs. Pam Irvin, Retirement Services Officer

Ms. Alishea Rim, Contact Representative, Retirement Services

3. COL (R) Montgomery opened with asking each person at the meeting to introduce themselves.

4. COL (R) Montgomery introduced COL David Sage, Garrison Commander, Fort Polk, LA. COL Sage asked the council members to address issues that may have a negative impact on Soldiers stationed at Fort Polk with their state and community leaders. He stated that:

- The schools are important for the quality of life of the children in the Fort Polk community and that building new homes and businesses are valuable to assist Soldiers who retire in this area.

- A Chamber of Commerce Forum was conducted that consisted of Vernon, Beauregard, and Rapides Parishes, with MG Hunt Downer acting as the facilitator, to discuss ways to bring businesses and better the communities in these parishes.

- COL Sage asked the council members again for their assistance with the outside communities on concerns that affect Fort Polk and thanked the council for their continued support.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked COL Sage for his remarks.

- COL (R) Montgomery asked for assistance from the council members in forming an actions committee to address concerns of the Fort Polk community. He encouraged them to contact community and state leaders in their area on issues of concern.

5. COL (R) Montgomery introduced CSM Rory Malloy, Post Command Sergeant Major, Fort Polk, LA. CSM Malloy stated that:

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- Fort Polk is about the best small town in America. Communities in the local areas provide outstanding support to the troops. When a parade is marching down the street carrying the US Colors, people react and treat Soldiers and Veterans with the respect they deserve.

- We have an obligation as military senior leaders to provide support to Retirees. Fort Polk has a lot of great facilities and improvements are still being made. We often receive feedback from Soldiers, their Families, and the community. Let us know if you see anything that can be improved and we will do our best to put it into play.

- CSM Malloy stated that he considered it a pleasure to be at the meeting and then he received questions and comments from the council.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked CSM Malloy for his remarks.

6. COL (R) Montgomery introduced CSM Kevin Sharkey, Garrison Command Sergeant Major, Fort Polk, LA. CSM Sharkey stated that he supports the Retiree council, the Soldiers, and the Families on Fort Polk. He asked the council for continued help in making Fort Polk the best home town in America and to contact him if they know of anything on this installation that needs to be improved.

- He informed the council that he considered it an honor to attend the meeting and thanked the council members and the people for their support and received questions and comments from the council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked CSM Sharkey for his remarks.

7. COL (R) Montgomery introduced CPT Dain Brooks, Chief of Ophthalmology, BJACH, Fort Polk, LA. CPT Brooks discussed the Ophthalmology services that are available to Retirees at BJACH. He also asked the Retirees to help spread the word about these services to the Retiree population. He received questions and comments from the council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked CPT Brooks for his remarks.

8. COL (R) Montgomery introduced COL Gwendolyn Lemaire, BJACH Acting Commander, Fort Polk, LA. COL Lemaire discussed the services that BJACH will provide during the Retiree Appreciation Day event. She stated that every effort will be made to provide flu vaccines to Retirees at this event.

- She informed the council that COL George Giacoppe, BJACH Commander, is working very hard to get the Retiree population back into the facility. She stated that the staff has a much

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better support now than there was a couple of years ago, and it looks like in the near future, Retirees who wish to come back into the facility for their care will be able to.

- She discussed changes that were made that improved the appointment system. She informed the council that a routine appointment may be scheduled 7 days in advance and a well appointment 28 days in advance. Also she stated that the best time to call for a same day appointment is after 1000.

- COL Lemaire received questions and comments from the Retiree council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked COL Lemaire for her remarks.

9. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mrs. Gail Braley, Chief, Personnel Operations Division, Fort Polk, LA. Mrs. Braley stated that she was moving to Ft. Rucker, AL and had accepted a position there as AG. She discussed the events of the upcoming Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) activities that will be held 20 October 2007.

- She informed the council that the RAD "County Fair" will be held at the Family Readiness Center, Bldg. 924, the Medical Services will be at Preventive Medicine, Bldg. 3504, the 1st CSB Dining Facility will provide brunch from 1000-1300 at a cost of \$4.10, and shuttle buses will provide transportation to and from these facilities.

- COL Sage addressed the council members on the upcoming Fall Festival on 3 November 2007 and other activities that will take place during that time.

- Mrs. Braley received questions and comments from council members.

10. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Eddie Wise, Executive Director of Greater Vernon Parish Chamber of Commerce to the council. Mr. Wise informed the council that the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee will host an appreciation dinner for the council on 19 October 2007. He stated that this is the first year that the chamber has participated and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be involved and hopes that this will be an annual event.

11. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Christopher Stevenson, the Health Benefits Advisor, Fort Polk, LA. Mr. Stevenson informed the council members that the TRICARE office staff is available to assist with benefits, claims, and billing information.

- He discussed changes that will occur with the TRICARE Reserve Select and National Guard Programs. He gave the council an update on the TRICARE network upcoming bid for a new contract, and encouraged the council to contract their state representatives about their concerns

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on benefit changes. He also discussed the requirements of the Mail Order Pharmacy Program and encouraged the council to utilize the program.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mr. Stevenson for his remarks.

12. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Michael Lanham, AAFES General Manager, Fort Polk, LA. Mr. Lanham provided an update to the council on AAFES services and facilities on post.

- He stated that designs for the main store exchange will be completed in mid-October with completion of the complex scheduled by Fall 2009, a Pizza Hut Restaurant will be established on North Fort Polk to open late October or early November, and on 28-30 September AAFES will hold a "Still Serving" sale to honor Retirees for their dedicated service.

- Mr. Lanham encouraged Retirees to provide feedback or suggestions on improvements at AAFES and received questions and comments from the Retiree council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mr. Lanham for his remarks.

13. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mrs. Barbara Watkins, Director, Alexandria VA Hospital. Mrs. Watkins provided the council with an update on recent changes and events involving the Alexandria VA Hospital. She stated that:

- Recently in the local area, the St. Michael's Homeless Shelter for Veterans opened and will be beneficial to all Veterans in need.

- The third annual "Stand Down for Homeless Veterans" will take place in Alexandria, LA at the Convention Center with the focus being on homeless Veterans in Rapides Parish and the surrounding areas. Counseling will be available on Veteran's benefits, dental check-ups, and other benefits.

- A proposal was submitted for a community-based VA outpatient clinic to be established no later than 2008/2009 in the Leesville/Fort Polk area.

- The VA Hospital and BJACH is working together to implement a process to assist Soldiers in receiving VA physical exams prior to separation.

- VA will ensure that Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are treated with an exceptional amount of care. The Veterans are to be enrolled, receive quality care and assistance with traumatic brain injuries, and other benefits.

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- The VA Hospital is conducting a “drive-by shooting” of the flu vaccine. The Veteran will drive up to the window and receive the flu vaccine. Documents required for the vaccine is the DD Form 214 and the Military ID Card or VA Card.

- Mrs. Watkins received questions and comments from the Retiree council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mrs. Watkins for her remarks.

14. COL (R) Montgomery discussed items of Old and Unfinished Business:

- SFC (R) Horn stated that there is \$227.50 in the flower fund.

- COL (R) Montgomery discussed the council project/event participation at Fort Polk.

- COL (R) Montgomery received questions and comments from the Retiree council members.

15. COL (R) Montgomery discussed items of New Business:

- COL (R) Montgomery stated that the Retiree Appreciation Day will be held on 20 October 2007 and encouraged all council members to attend.

- Mrs. Pam Irvin, Retirement Services Officer, stated that she spoke with MSG (R) Rudy Bourg concerning the RAD Golf Tournament for 19 October 2007 and he asked that council members donating door prizes for the golf tournament to drop off the donations at the Retirement Services Office.

- COL (R) Thompson stated that more active duty participation would be beneficial to the golf tournament.

- COL (R) Montgomery asked each council member for input and comments.

- COL (R) Montgomery stated that a tour of the Education Center/Library would be conducted after the meeting for members interested in participating.

12. The Chairman thanked the guest speakers, active council members, and honorary council members for attending. The meeting was adjourned.


Harry J. Montgomery
Colonel, AUS (Retired)
Chairman, Fort Polk Retiree Council

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DISTRIBUTION:

1 - Each member

1 - Army Retirement Services (DAPE-RSO), ATTN: Mr. Radke, Hoffman Bldg 1, Room 1240,
Alexandria, VA 22331-0470

1 - IMCOM, ATTN: Mr. Randy J. Blackburn, 2450 Stanley Rd, Suite 101,
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-6102