



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



IMSE-POL-HRM

10 September 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

1. The Fort Polk Retiree Council met on 10 September 2008 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	(Absent)
SMA (R) Julius W. Gates	(Present)
CSM (R) Carl C. Henderson	(Absent)
SGM (R) Anthony L. Barattini	(Absent)
MSG (R) Rudolph Bourg	(Present)
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	(Present)
SFC (R) T. J. Shelton	(Present)

Honorary Council Members Present:

COL (R) Norman Keith
COL (R) Wilson Orphe
CSM (R) Vernon Ware

Non-Members Attending:

BG James C. Yarbrough, Commanding General, JTRC and Fort Polk
COL David G. Sage, Garrison Commander, Fort Polk, LA
COL David N. Giacoppe, Jr., MEDDAC Commander
Mrs. Bobbi Stark, Director of Human Resources, Fort Polk, LA
Mr. Lazarus Thicklen, Chief of Military Personnel Services Division, Fort Polk, LA
Mr. Thomas Enright, Deputy Secretary, LA Department of Veteran Affairs
Mrs. Barbara Watkins, Director, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Alexandria, LA
Mrs. Marilyn A. Murry, Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator, VA, Alexandria, LA

IMSE-POL-HRM

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

Mr. Christopher Stevenson, Health Benefits Advisor
Mrs. Barbara Zanyk, Fort Polk Commissary Director
Mr. Michael Lanham, Fort Polk AAFES General Manager
Mrs. Pam Irvin, Retirement Services Officer, Fort Polk, LA
Ms. Alishea Rim, Contact Representative, Retirement Services

3. COL (R) Montgomery introduced BG James C. Yarbrough, Commanding General, JRTC and Fort Polk. COL (R) Montgomery provided the council members with a biography on the commanding general.

- BG Yarbrough stated that he was excited to attend the meeting and that Retirees have done an outstanding job in serving their country. He stated that the Retirees would be proud of today's Soldiers and leaders because they are the best. He stated that what the council members have done, and for serving their country is why we are here today and appreciation comes personally from him and the Fort Polk community.

- BG Yarbrough received questions and comments from the council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked BG Yarbrough for his remarks to the council members.

4. COL (R) Montgomery introduced COL David Sage, Garrison Commander, Fort Polk, LA. COL Sage briefed the council members concerning funds that were made available for renovation of barracks and for the support of the Fort Polk community. He talked about the Army Community Covenant that took place at the East Leesville Baptist Church, which included the Governor of Louisiana Bobby Jindal, US Senator Mary Landrieu, three US congressman, three police jury presidents, and the mayors of the surrounding communities; these individuals came together to establish their continuous support for the Soldiers and Families of Fort Polk. He also stated that:

- This year through the year of 2014, there will be a 30% increase of Soldiers at Fort Polk. Presently, there are 9,000 Soldiers and with the increase there will be close to 12,000.

- COL Sage asked for the council members to speak with their local officials about improving the quality, infrastructure, and technology of the schools in the local area, to include affordable housing in the local communities that are built to code and built properly, and road infrastructure to include back roads and highways near the installation.

- On 1 November the Heritage Day festivities will take place with an opening ceremony at 0900 at the Main Post Chapel and the Fall Fest will start at 1100.

IMSE-POL-HRM

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

- COL Sage received questions and comments from the council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked COL Sage for his remarks to the council members.

5. COL (R) Montgomery introduced COL George N. Giacoppe, Jr., MEDDAC Commander, Fort Polk, LA. COL Giacoppe informed the council members that the flu and pneumonia vaccines, as well as, diabetes care are some of the services available at the hospital. He stated that:

- The Retiree Appreciation Day activities last year were great and he was happy for the business received. The flu vaccines will be available for the Retiree Appreciation Day held on 25 October 2008.

- Medicare eligible Retirees should make sure that their shots are up to date. Physicians are available for eye checks, wellness, and physical exams.

- TRICARE On-line is an easy to use system to schedule appointments with your primary care physician. The easiest way to get to the website, is to go to the BJACH webpage and type in www.tricareonline.com.

- Since the Warrior Transition Unit is now a stand alone unit, there is easier access to the physicians and to set up appointments.

- COL Giacoppe received questions and comments from the council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked COL Giacoppe for his remarks to the council members.

6. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Thomas Enright, Deputy Secretary, LA Department of Veteran Affairs. Mr. Enright thanked the council members for the invitation to the meeting and said that the State of Louisiana Veterans Affairs core mission is to assist veterans with preparing for benefits through compensation and pension. He stated that:

- There are five War Veteran Homes in the state of Louisiana which are located at Reserve, Jennings, Jackson, Monroe, and Shreveport. The department is looking into creating more outreach programs and other programs for the veterans.

- The Women's Veterans Conference will take place on the 3rd and 4th of October on the USS Kidd in Baton Rouge. Brochures and flyers are being mailed and distributed to women veterans providing information about the registration fee of \$30 which includes a guest speaker from Washington, D.C., a luncheon, and a reception with a health screening and information on benefits.

- Later in the month of October, the department should receive a shipment of 20,000 medals that will honor every Louisiana veteran from World War II to the present. A five year plan through the Louisiana State Legislature, approved this year, that every Louisiana veteran will be recognized and receive a medal thanking them for serving.

- A bonus program will also be set up for Global War on Terrorism Severance. Going back to World War II, the state of Louisiana has awarded a monetary bonus to veterans in the amount of \$250.00 to every Louisiana veteran. For every major war conflict, the State of Louisiana has awarded the Louisiana veterans monetarily to say thank you.

- The Veterans Affairs Commission is doing a study to determine if there are any attractive options to increase the monetary bonus due to inflation. The Veterans Affairs Commission will make a recommendation to the state legislature, before the next legislative session spring 2009, to implement that plan to recognize all veterans who have served in the Global War on Terrorism to include Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. Everyone who was awarded the Expeditionary and other medals during this period will be eligible for this monetary award.

- A public information officer was recently hired to put together brochures, flyers, and to coordinate with the media to help get information out to the veterans. One project will be to revamp and change information on the website and make it more accessible for any Louisiana veteran.

- Mr. Enright received questions and comments from the Retiree Council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mr. Enright for his remarks to the council members.

7. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mrs. Barbara Watkins, Director, Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), Alexandria, LA. She made the following remarks:

- Since this is an election year, VA is anticipating getting increased funding and hopeful that we will not be under a Continuing Resolution as we have been for the past several years. The '08 budget for the medical center was approximately \$149 million, with about 65% of that going for salaries.

- One of our new initiatives is to venture with BJACH to provide combined exit physicals and compensation and pension examinations at the same time. Space has been provided at BJACH and the VAMC has identified staff that will begin on a part time basis conducting the exams and it is anticipated to grow quickly into a full time presence. This is an important program since it will reduce the amount of time between discharge and the beginning of any earned compensation for Service Connected conditions. Veterans have expressed a lot of concern nationally regarding the length of time it takes for them to receive the money needed to resume civilian life.

IMSE-POL-HRM

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

- Placement of a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) at Fort Polk was recommended several years ago under the CARES process. CARES looked nationally at utilization of VA space and for gaps in services and identified locations where additional VA services are needed. The Fort Polk/Leesville area is an underserved area that can benefit from a CBOC. The clinic will be located on the facility and COL Sage and Mrs. Watkins have discussed a couple possible locations and more discussion will continue.

- Two additional CBOC's have been approved for Alexandria to manage, one in Lake Charles and one in Natchitoches. All three of these clinics are to be open by 1 October 2009, which will be a challenge.

- The VAMC is participating in the Veterans History Project, which is managed by the Library of Congress. It involves staff interviewing veterans who would like to have their personal military experience documented as a part of a permanent record in the Library. Any member of the council who is interested in participating should call Mrs. Watkins at (318) 483-5057 and leave contact information with her secretary. Someone will then call you to get more information and to schedule an interview.

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

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mrs. Watkins for her remarks to the council members.

8. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mrs. Marilyn A. Murry, Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator, VAMC, Alexandria, LA. Mrs. Murry discussed different diseases and treatments for the eyes and passed visual samples around to the council members. Mrs. Murry provided contact information to the council members.

- Mrs. Murry received questions and comments from the Retiree Council members.

- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mrs. Murry for her remarks to the council members.

9. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Christopher Stevenson, Fort Polk's Health Benefits Advisor. Mr. Stevenson discussed that the TRICARE On-line Program allows you to go on-line and enables you to set up appointments with a provider at the hospital. He also provided council members with a brochure on the program. He stated that:

- TRICARE On-line allows you to set up an appointment with a specific doctor, if needed, on a regular basis. This on-line program is better to use than calling the appointment telephone line. To access the program go to the Fort Polk BJACH's homepage or go to www.TRICARE.mil. Everyone using the website will need to establish their own separate account.

IMSE-POL-HRM

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

- There is a forty-eight hour turn around time when ordering medication on-line. The South Region is currently under a contract bid and the new contract will go into effect fiscal year 2010.
- If you live outside of a forty mile radius of the military treatment facilities or “catchman” area, you will be disenrolled from the TRICARE Prime program and enrolled into TRICARE Standard. This can be waived by the hospital commander up to one hundred miles away from the hospital. If it is more than one hundred miles, it will be approved through the contract or the TRICARE regional office, South region.
- For higher population areas such as Baton Rouge or Lafayette, the contractor can establish those areas as Prime service areas so that the retirees will still have the Prime program. Since we do not know who the contractor will be this is just a preliminary suggestion.
- Mr. Stevenson stated that he is providing updated information to council members with emails and if members are not receiving these updates to please provide your e-mail address to Ms. Rim or Mrs. Irvin so that this information will get to you.
- Mr. Stevenson received questions and comments from the council members.
- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mr. Stevenson for his remarks to the council members.

10. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mrs. Barbara Zanyk, Fort Polk Commissary Director, Fort Polk, LA. Mrs. Zanyk stated that the commissary is in preparation for the special case lot sales that will take place the first week in October. The case lot sale for the RAD will take place on 25 October 2008.

- Mrs. Zanyk received questions and comments from the Retiree Council members.
- Mrs. Zanyk announced that this will be her last attendance at the council meeting due to her retirement. She stated that she will remain involved with the council to assist with problems that arise.
- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mrs. Zanyk for her remarks to the council members.

11. COL (R) Montgomery introduced Mr. Michael Lanham, AAFES General Manager, Fort Polk, LA. Mr. Lanham stated that if you know of a small business in your area that would like to be a short term vendor with AAFES, please have them call the AAFES Service Business Manager, Ms. Pam Taylor, at (337) 537-0858. He stated that:

- AAFES has a vast amount of employment opportunities available for part or full time employment in food or retail services. Also, there are more lifestyle positions that are opening up. To search for available positions and apply on-line go to the website at www.aafes.com.

- Using your Star Card will give you three cents per gallon off your gas purchase.
- He would like to encourage Retirees to provide input on changes or services that they would like to see in the near future.
- The main AAFES shopping center complex is up for bid and encouraged the council members to attend the groundbreaking that should take place this fall. The complex should be completed by spring of 2010.
- The Friday after Thanksgiving sale will offer sales on 52 inch and 46 inch televisions. Mr. Lanham provided the council members with a "goody bag" filled with catalogues and coupons.
- Mr. Lanham received questions and comments from the Retiree Council members.
- COL (R) Montgomery thanked Mr. Lanham for his remarks to the council members.

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

- SFC (R) Horn stated that there is \$117.00 in the flower fund.

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

- COL (R) Montgomery stated that the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) will be held on 25 October 2008 with the County Fair activities at the Family Readiness Center (FRC), Bldg 924, and Medical Services at Preventive Medicine, Bldg 3504. The Alexandria Medical Center will provide carts to transport Retirees from their vehicles to the FRC. He also stated that a survey was conducted last year and it was decided that a video briefing would be provided by the command group for the event.
- COL (R) Montgomery stated that door prize drawings will be done randomly throughout the day and winners do not have to be present to win.
- COL (R) Montgomery asked the council if there were any comments.
- Mrs. Pam Irvin, the Retirement Services Officer, encouraged the Retiree Council members to attend the RAD. She provided information on the RAD activities and the barbecue that will be held at the Creole Corner the evening before.
- MSG (R) Rudy Bourg provided information on the RAD Golf Tournament. He stated that now is the time to start collecting door prizes for the tournament and encouraged each council member to solicit door prizes from their area businesses. He requested that the council members notify him of the collected donations and names of donors so that each can be acknowledged

IMSE-POL-HRM

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Retiree Council Meeting, 10 September 2008

appropriately with a thank you card and the name of the recipient. He provided flyers for the golf tournament.

- SFC (R) Steve Humphries provided information on military headstones and provided the council members the headstone application, VA Form 40-1330. He advised the members to be aware of funeral directors charging fees for services that are free of charge, such as a military honors detail. He provided the council members with a listing of the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of all Casualty Assistance Coordinators. He also encouraged them to ensure their family members keep up with important documents such as the DD Form 214 and other pertinent information.

- COL (R) Montgomery asked the council members to keep their e-mail addresses up to date.

13. 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

DISTRIBUTION:

1 - Each member

1 - Army Retirement Services (DAPE-HRP-RSO), ATTN: Mr. Radke, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22331-0470

1 - IMCOM-SE, ATTN: Mr. Michael Sherrill, Bldg 171, 1593 Hardee Ave, Fort McPherson, GA 30330