

Minutes of
Missouri National Guard Retiree Council

1 October 2016

The meeting of the Missouri National Guard Retiree Council began at 1200 on 1 October 2016 in the Patriot Center at the Ike Skelton Training Site, Jefferson City with the following retirees and other interested parties in attendance.

Bill Leeper	Dave Riley
Jack Argent	Bob Julius
Matt Jenkins	Donal Firebaugh
Bruce Pearre	Gary Boyd
Jim Dunn	Cecil Connett
Audie Pruitt	David Simons
Don Koonce	

Larry Jenkins, Columbia VA Office

Debra Havens, Retirement Services Officer

Col. Chris Mickan, Chief Family and Warrior Support

Tony Bamvakais, Military Executive, Office of the Adjutant General

Bob called the meeting to order at 1200. Roll call of members present and 5 regions were represented. The northeast and northwest regions were absent. Gary Boyd stated there were not enough MONGRC members present for a quorum.

Bob led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance and Bruce Pearre offered the invocation.

Bob called for the Secretary's report. The members reviewed copies of the minutes from the last MONGRC meeting. No discussion about the report and the minutes were approved as presented.

Debra introduced Larry Jenkins from the Columbia VA hospital. Larry presented a short biography and his job at the VA. He distributed handouts for the Missouri Veterans Homes, Veterans choice card and eligibility/enrollment in VA Healthcare. Larry explained how eligibility and qualifications are based on last year's taxable income. Qualified veterans and spouses are eligible for travel but children are excluded. Discussion if someone age 65 with Medicare, part B coverage and VA eligible are not allowed to seek medical outside VA facilities. The Columbia hospital has an in house homeless veteran coordinator for those seeking assistance, and will be starting a housing coordinator in the near future.

He also discussed a Missouri Conservation Department program that allows disabled veterans to apply for a Conservation Department ID online. The recipient will need to have the ID printed offsite and then mailed to them. Larry discussed the Choice Card and who is qualified for it. His handout lists a www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/ website and phone number 1-866-606-8198 for additional information about qualifications. The handout states if you are currently not eligible to be sure and keep your choice card.

Bob introduced Tony Bamvakais to the Council. He suggested the Council utilize a telephone conference for those Council members who are unable to physically attend scheduled meetings to ensure quorums are present during meetings. Debra will need to set the call up with the appropriate staff for each scheduled meeting. He stated that Mark Jones does a great job at the TAA position and more soldiers need to use him for assistance. The Missouri Military Museum continues to expand their displays and is hosting its 2nd annual public open house today. The state guard strength continues to grow as personnel changes occur and more units are added to the states roster of units in fiscal 2017. The state expects to deploy 1000 troops in the coming year. The education benefits from the state and federal side both are still available to soldiers. The Resiliency Chapel Center exterior will be changing as each major command will have a designated area. The Missouri Relief Fund has been changed to include active reserve soldiers who qualify for assistance. Up to \$3000.00 is available to a family from this fund. Information about the fund and process to apply can be found on the MOGUARD website. Col. Mickan stated the Care Team map posted at each armory contains contact for the coordinators of the fund. Money is still available thru the Continuing Resolution passed by Congress, and some travel pay for retirement purposes for families is included in the funds available. The suicide rate continues to climb in Missouri and it has a great amount of focus from multiple factions of the Missouri Guard. So far in 2016 9 Army and 2 Air Guardsmen have taken their lives. The majority of these soldiers are the 'millennial' age group. Col. Mickan described videos the State has produced that are part of the preventive training being given to address these issues. The videos are also available via YouTube. Col Mickan stated he will forward the Council more information on the videos. Tony also discussed some state wide facility changes in usage and assignments, some of which have funding attachments and/or stipulations.

Jim Dunn proposed Audie Pruitt and Cecil Connette as new members from the southwest region to replace Jim Bradley and Bob Cole, respectively. Council voted to accept both individuals as members.

Old business. The Council discussed the current Co-chair vacancy. The consensus of the Council is that Bob will remain as Chair until the next elections in October 2017. Gary Boyd explained the Foundation funds that remain in the River Region Credit Union. Gary and Jim Dunn reviewed the Foundation minutes prior to the Council meeting and stated the Foundation minutes showed the money was to be given to the Missouri National Guard Association (MONGA) when the Foundation account was closed. As the Council now knows, the account was never closed and the money transferred to MONGA. After discussion about disposing of the funds, Donal Firebaugh made a motion to rescind the Foundation motion and use the funds for regional RAD activities. Cecil Connette 2nd the motion and it was passed by the Council. A motion was made, and passed, to deposit the funds into the 203rd Houn Dawg Retirees Association treasury due to their 501C3 status. They agreed to create a separate accounting ledger to account for the funds and issue checks when directed by the Council. There was a general discussion

about what constitutes a Council quorum according to the current active Council members. It was agreed that a review of the By Laws, Constitution and SOP is needed. Changes will be proposed and e-mailed/sent to all members for their review. That will allow a vote on the changes during the Jan. 7, 2017 meeting.

Council retired for a 15 minute break at 1400.

East Region. The east region will be conducting a RAD on April 22 in Building 24 at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis. A caterer has been secured, reduce the number of prizes and vendors, plan to invite Gen Frank Grass (Ret) as the guest speaker, requests the RSO assist with mailing invitations on March 1 and ask Council members to help prepare the envelopes for mailing during the January Council meeting.

West Region. Gary states the 110th chapter has voted to sell the approximately 40 acres they own. They will be donating 4 acres to The Adjutant General prior to the sale. The Missouri Guard will be conducting the survey of the property. The chapter is also awaiting a commercial appraisal of the property so they will know an approximate value. Final disposal of the property has not been finalized, nor what they will do with the funds derived from sale of the property. A meeting for the property status update has been scheduled for October 15. A RAD status for 2017 is unknown until the chapter's November meeting. Gary stated he will invite the chapter's President and Vice President to the January Council meeting.

Southwest Region. Approximately 600 soldiers of the 203rd Battalion were individually met with by retirees during the 203rd's Annual Training July 16-19 at Camp Crowder. The We Care Fund has assisted 4 soldiers already in 2016, and an active 203rd member is one of the 22 who commit suicide. The contract for TRICARE administration is up for bids again by DOD which also means Kathy's job is in jeopardy again. This is very stressful for Kathy and her family. The Missouri Guard would lose an extremely valuable and knowledgeable asset if Kathy were to lose her job. She also stated United Health Care, current administrator, has appealed to DOD about the contract award which has been awarded to another company. Jim stated a 2017 RAD will be discussed by the 203rd chapter and, if voted on to host, conduct one at Camp Crowder in the early fall. Cecil Connette stated the Springfield Patriot chapter has encountered problems with a Colonel about use and access to the Armory. At this point the chapter has decided to move their meetings outside of the armory. He also stated there is a new Colonel and the Council urged him to meet with the new commander about armory use and access. Other chapters have encountered this problem in the past, and it has been immediately remedied by Jefferson City staff.

Central Region. Debra stated Rick Rice has resigned due to personal reasons. The Council regrets this and notes that he was a great asset, and will be deeply missed. It was mentioned that the local Jefferson City chapter recently lost Steve Cheshire. Debra informed the Council that Todd Henderson wants to join when he retires from the VA in January 2017. Bruce states he will be resigning in the future, so the Council informed him that he needs to provide his replacement. The region does not have a RAD planned as of now.

New Business. Bob urged all current members to seek volunteers to serve on the Council, and consider serving as officers for the next term. A general discussion about the regions that are not represented on the Council and what actions can be taken to get the regions actively represented.

RSO Update. Debra reports the RSO staff will be moving and vacating current office space. They will be relocated and/or reconfigured into a common office environment which will be more effective and efficient. There are currently 3 staff members, including Debra. John Lewis is still working on the state database and has made large improvements, and reductions in the size.

Jim Dunn suggested the Council binders need to be reviewed and/or updated in the near future. The Air Guard retirement process needs to be***written/researched*** inserted, and information about the new retirement program as well when it becomes available.

Bruce offered benediction and the meeting was adjourned at 1500.

The next meeting will be held at 1200 on 7 January 2017 at the Ike Skelton Training Site, Patriot Center conference room, Jefferson City.

Prepared by:

Jim Dunn, Secretary