



Army Sustainment Command

News Release

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Four members of Arsenal community retire

ROCK ISLAND, Ill.—Family, friends and coworkers gathered at Rock Island Arsenal's Constitution Square to celebrate the retirement of a Department of the Army civilian and three Soldiers, March 31.

Maj. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine, commanding general of the Army Sustainment Command, hosted the ceremony and extended his personal gratitude to the retirees.

"We're taking this opportunity to offer these individuals the most sincere and heartfelt thanks on behalf of our grateful nation, our Army, our command and on my own personal behalf as well," said Fontaine.

The retirees - Diana Balmer, ASC chief of staff; Col. Darryl Bradley, ASC director of support operations; Col. Richard Burns, ASC deputy director for field support; and Sgt. 1st Class Leonel Rubio, ASC maintenance noncommissioned officer - have a combined total of nearly 120 years of service.

During the ceremony, all four received decorations: Balmer received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award and Superior Civilian Service Award; Bradley was awarded the Legion of Merit; Burns received the Legion of Merit; Rubio was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal; and all received certificates of retirement and a U.S. flag.

Though most of the new retirees plan to spend their time enjoying leisure pursuits, some are still nervous.

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“My feelings right now are joy and fear because this has been a part of my life for so long,” said Balmer, who worked 41 years for the Army.

Balmer said she hopes to volunteer in schools and libraries because she understands the importance of children getting a good start on reading and feels that she can help make a difference.

The event concluded with a retreat ceremony, a military tradition rife with symbolism. From the bugle sounding the somber notes of retreat, to the firing of the ceremonial cannon, the ceremony signifies the end of the duty day for Soldiers. But, for the retirees, it signified the closing of a chapter in their lives.

“We honor the flag just after we honor our retirees which is very appropriate, and a proper way to send them off as they formally end their days of active service to our Army,” said Fontaine. “After all, they served under that flag, and devoted their time and talent to defending the values embodied by that flag. Through their hard work and devotion to duty, they paid tribute to the flag. Their unwavering loyalty to our nation brought more distinction to our flag, and earned them the gratitude of all our nation’s citizens.”

Ceremonial music was provided by the Army Material Command Band’s Brass Quintet.

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