

**DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE  
SERVICES (DACOWITS) MEETING MINUTES  
May 16-17, 2005**

DACOWITS held a meeting May 16-17, 2005, at the DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City, National Airport, 300 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia. Members and public present during the meeting are at enclosure (1).

**16 May 2005**

The Committee began with LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC, Retired, Chair, DACOWITS opening the meeting at 8:30 a.m. New points of contacts (POCs) were introduced to the Committee by Col Dailey. Samuel Retherford is the new POC in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). He replaces MAJ Harvey. Maj Abbie Luck the new Air Force POC, and replaces Lt Col James Davis. Karen Morgen is the new POC from Military Community and Family Policy at OSD. She replaces Lin Porter. Maj John Yates served as a stand-in for Lt Col Nilda Urrutia from the OSD. The National Guard representative, CMSgt Allen, is standing in for Phyllis Brantley.

LtGen Mutter outlined the agenda focus for the first day of the meeting, commenting that the morning session would be dominated by briefings of a somewhat Army-focused nature. These briefings would be followed by Committee discussion on most-recent site visits performed by Committee members. LtGen Mutter stressed the importance of gathering strong quotations to be compiled in consideration of their usage in the report.

After a luncheon session, the Committee would continue site visit discussion before proceeding to a review of a draft report performed by Caliber, using protocol questions devised by the Committee, and discovering what usable information had been compiled to this point.

**Briefer: LTC Carl A. Castro Ph.D.**

**Walter Reed Army Institute of Research**

**Brief: [Work-Family Balance in Soldiers and Their Families](#)**

LTC Castro's report, looks at issues of work-family conflict for Service members, focusing in large part on what leaders at local levels might be able to do to facilitate supporting a family-friendly work climate. Castro's data includes the responses to surveys of 341 spouses of 82nd Airborne Corps service members based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. These surveys contained questions on work-family conflict issues. An initial finding was that responses did not vary much

based on the particular rank of the spouses serving. There also appeared to be no relationship at all between work-family conflict and levels of alcohol consumption. A central finding and conclusion of the study is that a strong sense of leadership at the core local level can help Service members and their spouses better handle issues of work-family conflict when they arise. Family-supportive organizational policies do mediate the relationship between leadership and work-family conflict.

**Briefer: COL Karl Zeff, Assistant Chief**

**Department of Mental Health William Beaumont Army Medical Center**

**Fort Bliss, Texas**

**Brief: [Military Family Responses to Deployment](#)**

COL Zeff first made mention of the short supply of psychiatrists and psychologists in the military throughout the entire country. For example, in El Paso, a city of 700,000 people, there are a total of three child psychiatrists. In a survey approximately 10 years old, it was discovered that there is an inventory of only 45 child psychiatrists in the entire military, out of the pool of 120 total psychiatrists. COL Zeff, also stressed the importance of local commander/local leadership support as the cornerstone to providing guidance and support to military families. He also mentioned support of surrounding communities can play a pivotal role in the mental well-being of spouses and children before, during, and after deployment of service members.

The advent of the Internet makes possible whole new avenues for spouses and children in need of emotional support and feedback from others in like positions or from those who can provide counseling. Pilot studies have shown that younger spouses at redeployment are more vulnerable to stress reactions. By the same measure, service time tends to enable families to be able to cope better.

Initial studies of data obtained during the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have found higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorders in returning soldiers than in previous combat situations such as those in Somalia and Bosnia in the 1990s. This correlates with the higher number of firefight that soldiers in the field in Iraq are experiencing when compared with the levels experienced in previous missions, to include the earlier mission in Afghanistan.

COL Zeff and the Committee discussed ways of facilitating the dissemination of material that would be useful to spouses, Service members, and children. It was pointed out that large numbers of children are computer-savvy, and that maybe materials could be presented to children in CD-ROMs, VHS tapes and DVDs to help them better comprehend the issues confronting their parents. The ability for spouses to communicate better with each other via the Internet has also been seen as a positive element in mediating stress levels.

COL Zeff stated that in order to mobilize the resources of the intrinsic mental health professionals in the Service, they must get out of their offices and make more attempts at face-to-face interaction at large-scale events such as pre-deployment and post-deployment meetings.

Following COL Zeff's presentation, LtGen Mutter called the Committee to a luncheon recess at 11:50 a.m.

Following the luncheon recess, LtGen Mutter called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m., to begin discussion of site visits, work-life balance issues, and retention goals.

Ms. Rosalie Silberman mentioned her concerns of whether or not the work-life balance theme was to be the all-encompassing theme of this, the Committee's third report. Do we want the kind of military that is family-friendly? And what does it take to achieve that goal while growing recruitment and increasing retention? Mrs. Mary Nelson followed about up that set of comments with concerns of her own that maybe there were not enough women participants in these studies, and also not enough questions asked specifically about women.

Dr. Lynda Davis noted a sense of awkwardness about the questions asked; sometimes simply the order of the questions asked is wrong. Ms. Catherine O'Neill added that they're long and complicated. COL Dailey commented that the transcribers have been doing an excellent job of figuring out which answers may really be best suited for which questions. Dr. Davis repeated an element that was discussed in COL Zeff's presentation, that few if any people know of Military OneSource, and how can people be made aware of it is an important issues.

Mrs. Nelson mentioned her desire to see a specific section in the report include information on women-in-combat issues and how better to retain women service members. Issues of transformation were placed in the light of the current Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) list that has just been published. COL Darryl Ladd Pattillo, USAR, Retired raised the issue of bonuses, or the lack thereof, and its effect on retention, which was followed by a comment from Dr. Davis that there has also been talk of soldiers desiring earlier windows of retirement. Issues of pregnancy and the planning of parenthood are also factors in retention rates.

Concerning service members deployed in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, it was mentioned how improved technology; i.e. phone service and internet, had had a huge positive impact on the morale of soldiers and their families in the increased opportunities for day-to-day contact with their loved ones. Ms. Margaret Rowell stated that it might be valuable to look at the Army and the Marines by themselves on a few issues, because some issues may be particularly germane to those branches of service while the Air Force and Navy could be viewed separately. LtGen Mutter mentioned recruiting and retention also as functions of the economy, and that the recent economic upturn might give service members more career path choices, including staying

in the Service longer.

Ms. Rosalie Silberman commented on a negative experience in dealing with Navy junior enlisted women with sour attitudes and a general strong dislike of all things Navy.

Ms. Rowell seconded the thought when she added she'd had a similar experience with Navy junior enlisted women.

**Briefing of Col Penny F. Pierce, Ph.D. RN, USAFR,  
Uniformed Health Services University**

**Brief:** [Air Force Women's Health Surveillance Program](#)

Col Pierce's report centers on a new study on women currently serving in the Iraqi operation; an entire program of research providing long-term surveillance of women's health for those women deployed in the theater of operations and elsewhere during war time. Three major dependent variables in the study are emotional health, physical health, and retention.

In responses to questionnaires and self-reports given to and performed by women service members, women tend to under-report levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when compared to their reports of symptoms of PTSD. This has been true of several studies, including those performed in the Gulf War and the current Iraqi Conflict.

In terms of work-family conflict and depression, women in the field were more likely to feel job distress and or feelings of an unsupportive spouse than any measure of parental stress caused by worrying about their children. A certain category of women with disturbed physical/mental health, negative emotional functioning, disturbed financial well-being, could be frequently traced to usual signs of sexual abuse/trauma at some previous stage in their lives. At this point, Col Vance Shaw, USAFR, Retired, commented that the military should provide some sort of guarantee for women coming into the military that they will not be assaulted or molested while in service to the country, and finding ways of making punishments harsher for offenders in this area.

A significant and repeated annual figure of 80 percent female Service member retention means that the obvious majority of women serving have passion for what they're doing and should continue to be supported. Again, the greatest contributor to women leaving the military was an unsupportive spouse.

Col Pierce mentioned the bottom-line issue for the entire research project is looking into what can be prevented; not what can be fixed over time. The project is funded through 2007 to continue research into these issues of deployed women.

The members reassembled to discuss the major theme of the upcoming report will be how can the

requirements of a military career be balanced with personal goals and family responsibilities. Using protocol questions asked to a variety of people in theater and at home: women, men, children, the Committee hopes to find effective ways of achieving that work-life balance. The report will also address issues of future recruitment and retention.

Public forum was opened at 5:15 p.m. and no statements were made or received. LtGen Mutter adjourned Day One at 5:23 p.m.

## **17 May 2005**

LtGen Mutter called Day Two to order at 8:30 a.m. Talking points to lead off the morning were the importance of sending Requests for Information (RFIs) in follow-up to the presenters of Day One material, to make sure copies of reports mentioned during the proceedings could be acquired to help provide guidance to Caliber Associates as they prepare drafts of the year's report. LtGen Mutter mentioned how, for example, with regard to the previous day's presentation from Col Castro, it was clear more money was needed to study the work-family balance paradigm and to better understand what policies are working and which are not.

Other RFIs are needed for other topics brought forth the day before, including spouse-family readiness policies; family-friendly policies and their impact on soldier retention; new metrics for getting better training to commanders and for studying children; and the possible raising awareness of the lifelong impact on female soldiers of rape/sexual assault. Ms. Silberman and LtGen Mutter posited that the latter issue could receive its own treatment in a whole separate chapter or appendix of the report.

### **Briefing of Col Joyce A. Adkins, Ph.D, MPH**

**Director of Operational Stress and Deployment Mental Health**

**Office of the Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs**

**Brief:** [Force Health Protection Combat/Operational Stress and Deployment Mental Health](#)

Col Adkins' report to the Committee focused on deployment mental health, operational stress and combat stress. Her data are cross-sectional, meaning not from the same group, and not necessarily from the same time, and are also a mixture of the epidemiological and clinical.

In July 2003, the President's Commission on Mental Health developed a set of goals for the nation in terms of mental health. It envisions a time when mental health is considered an essential part of overall health, and not something separate and apart; it hopes for a future where early mental health screening assessment and referral are more common practices. It speaks of the importance of "telehealth" possibilities, as technological advances make possible the sharing of care information among different disciplines. Col Adkins' team of researchers uses these

national goals as a framework for the OSD's look at post-deployment health reassessment.

Col Adkins divides stress into acute effects and chronic effects; the acute effects being positive and the chronic being negative. Being able to shut off the stressor effect of being deployed in a warzone, or having more buffers in place, can help improve the long-term disposition of soldiers as they return home from their high-stress deployments.

A finding of note from studies is that as soldiers received more training and preparation, the levels of stress were minimized. She referred to both the positive and negative effects of being able to better communicate with loved ones from the front lines.

As might be predicted, the amount of conflict and increased frequency of exposure to combat increased the number of stress symptoms. Of central importance to the assessment of these Service members is performing evaluations of them as soon as possible post-deployment, the first one being performed as soon as three to six months post-deployment. A new OSD outreach and public affairs communication plan will publicize the fact that this assessment program will be implemented as of June 10, 2005. More information on this program is available on the OSD/OSDMH web site.

Following the presentation, LtGen Mutter called for a short recess.

### **Briefing of Morris P. Peterson, Chief, Army Personnel Survey Office**

#### **U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

**Brief:** [Women in the Army: Career Plans, Reasons for Leaving, and Trends in Attitudes](#)

Dr. Peterson presented research focusing on attempting to better understand why officers and enlisted are leaving the Army, females compared to males, and then also examined quality-of-life differences between the sexes.

In terms of career intent, the statistical differences in male and female responses about retention or attrition were insignificant; no clear-cut losses or gains in Army forces are noted.

Surveys given to men and women covered a range of 58 items; results suggest women have been more happy with the level of medical care given, while men have been more satisfied with leadership levels and the availability of Army child care. Both males and females report a high level of pride in telling friends and others of their service in the Army.

### **Briefing of MAJ Lisa Griffin**

#### **Army Human Resources Command (AHRC)**

**Brief:** [U.S. Army Officer Personnel Management System \(OPMS\) Update](#)

Maj Griffin's investigative team has been conducting a comprehensive, holistic review of the Army's Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS). Such reviews were historically mandated to have been performed every six months; however, one has not been performed since prior to 9/11/01. Many OPMS files were destroyed when the plane hit the Pentagon on that date, and the AHRC has worked since then to restore and rebuild.

The AHRC mission statement lists the number one priority of learning how to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force. Research has discovered additional pay is not as great an incentive for females as it is to males in terms of retention. Maj Griffin suggests broadening opportunities for policies such as sabbaticals and other "on-and-off" ramps soldiers could utilize to provide additional incentive for remaining in and returning to the Services. Options of flexibility are in fact mentioned as attractive incentives by Service members, in response to survey questions. Retention of junior soldiers as seen as vital, as their attrition levels tend to be highest.

LtGen Mutter called for a luncheon recess at 12:00 p.m.

At 1:00 p.m., LtGen Mutter reconvened the meeting and facilitated a discussion of topics to be compiled for the report, as well as discussion of when to hold the next meeting. Tentative dates chosen for the next DACOWITS meeting are October 17-18, 2005. LtGen Mutter repeated the desire for RFIs to be forthcoming to be included in the upcoming report, including studies on the divorce rate; studies on how children and spouses cope with deployment; and Col Hogue's study on post-deployment stress.

### **Briefing of COL Mike Custer, Ph.D., USA**

**Chief of Nursing Research**

**Walter Reed Army Hospital, Washington, DC**

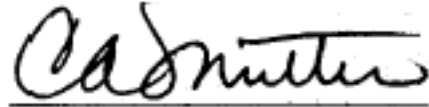
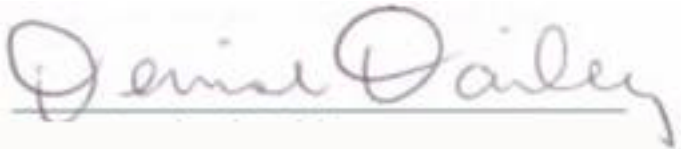
**Brief:** [Army Unintended Pregnancy Study](#)

COL Custer presented findings on the Army Unintended Pregnancy Study, which he called a work-in-progress, with data still being compiled. Using data from the Defense Management Data Center, COL Custer noted the various composition rates for females in the branches of service. The Air Force has the highest percentage of females, at almost 20 percent. The Army and Navy have remained relatively consistent over the last several years, with female service at 15 percent in both.

With regard to rates of pregnancy in the Army, the DMDC found that 19 percent of women had babies in 2001. In COL Custer's own dissertation, looking at 212 women who delivered while at Fort Hood, about 51 percent of the pregnancies were unintended, and in half of those, the women were not using contraception.

Following the presentation, LtGen Mutter opened the floor for further discussion of topics needing to be addressed and included in the upcoming report. Dr. Davis mentioned the issue from the Day One meeting about the need to increase awareness of the Military OneSource program. LtGen Mutter spoke of Operation Military Child Care, the program for Guard and Reserves to help pay for child care out in the community in areas not having military bases and no military child care available.

LtGen Mutter thanked the panel and the POCs for their participation and attendance before adjourning the meeting at approximately 4:35 p.m.



Report submitted by  
Col Denise Dailey, USA Military Director,  
DACOWIT

Report certified by  
LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret) FY  
2005 DACOWITS Chair

Attachments: As stated

## **DACOWITS MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MAY 16-17, 2005 MEETING**

### **Committee Members Present May 16, 2005**

Dr. Lynda Davis  
Mrs. Margaret Hoffmann  
LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC, Retired  
Ms. Margaret Robson  
Ms. Virginia Rowell  
Col Vance Shaw, USAFR, Retired  
Ms. Rosalie (Ricky) Silberman  
Sen. J.P. Duniphan  
Col Darryl Ladd Pattillo, USAR, Retired  
Mrs. Mary Nelson  
Ambassador Ellen Sauerbrey



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