

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS) MEETING REPORT

**December 3-6, 2002**

DACOWITS held a meeting December 3-6, 2002 at the Courtyard by Marriott, Crystal City, 2899 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA. This was the first meeting of the FY 03 members. (Members and other attendees are listed in enclosures (1) and (2).) The purpose of the meeting was to provide these new members training on their roles and the issues pertinent to the Committee charter as well as to self-organize. All but a four-hour block (December 3, 2002 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) was open to the public.

On **Tuesday, December 3, 2002**, COL Denise Dailey, Military Director, DACOWITS, opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. She welcomed all present and introduced the Honorable Charles Abell, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). Mr. Abell welcomed the new members and spoke of the Department of Defense's vision for the Committee. The Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense were personally involved in the reconstitution of the Committee and revisions to its charter. The primary change to the charter is its expansion to include family issues. DACOWITS brings a unique perspective to the Department in that, through installation visits and focus groups, members can put their fingers on the pulse. Focus groups are only one tool, however, that the Committee can and should use. Additionally, reports must have an analytical base and include fact-based findings. Mr. Abell reminded members that the charter is like the Committee's constitution. Issues should stem from the charter. DoD's issue priorities for the Committee for the first year are as follows:

### Women's Health (Human Resources (HR) Strategy)

- Recently passed legislation allows family members to choose between on- post and off-post OB/GYN facilities beginning in December 2003. How do we keep our customers on post? [See Dr. Chu's amplification of this on Friday printed below.]

### How do we improve retention rates and reduce attrition rates over the course of a career? (HR Strategy)

Look at career paths, intermittent service, "lateral" entries, and "Total Force" participation.

- Why is female officer retention lower than DoD officer retention at critical career decision-making points in their service?

## Effects of Deployments on Families (Social Compact)

- What can the services do to enhance family readiness to support warfighters as the US prosecutes the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)?
- How can installations better support services members and families under the long-term nature of the GWOT?
- What do families want?

## What makes the military the preferred occupational or career choice? (HR Strategy)

- How do we recruit, utilize, and retain a force for the present and future?

## What do we know about Spousal Employment? (Social Compact)

- What is the general nature of spousal employment and how does it affect the service member's decisions and quality of life?

## Alternatives and Preferences for Housing in all Ranks (Social Compact)

- Are preferences to live on post or off post due to schools, services, security, or other?

Mr. Abell told members that he was the Committee's link to the Secretary and that he has an open-door policy. He also congratulated the members on their selection; they were chosen from a field of extraordinary candidates. Lastly, Mr. Abell presented each member a DACOWITS pin and appointment certificate.

LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret), the DACOWITS Chair, then welcomed everyone. She noted that the Committee would be operating a little differently this year. Also, the overriding concern for the Committee is military readiness. Quality of life is very much a part of military readiness. The Committee members, staff, and Points of Contact then introduced themselves.

[COL Denise Dailey, Military Director, DACOWITS](#), gave a brief outlining the Committee's mission and process.

From 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., the meeting was not open to the public. The Committee

completed some administrative training on the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Anti-Terrorism Level I Awareness, media, and financial entitlements and also broke for lunch.

From 2:00 p.m. on, the meeting was again open to the public. Briefings included the following:

[“Military Personnel Management: Human Resource Strategy \(Military Personnel\), Regular vs. Reserve \(Initial Appointments on Active Duty\), Recruiting Update, and Compensation.”](#) Briefers included Mr. Bradford Loo, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, and CAPT Chris Kopang – all from the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military Personnel Policy).

Standards of Conduct/Ethics brief, presented by Mr. Robert Stoss, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Defense.

**(NOT AVAILABLE)**

[“Quality of Life & Transformation: Underwriting Family Support,”](#) presented by Ms. Aggie Byers, Office of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy).

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

On **Wednesday, December 4, 2002**, the meeting began at 8:30 a.m. Dr. Janice Laurence and Dr. Armando Estrada (Naval Postgraduate School and Industrial College of the Armed Forces) conducted focus group training all day. They began with presentations and followed with role-playing exercises, giving members a chance to conduct mock focus groups. After a critique, the meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

On **Thursday, December 5, 2002**, the meeting did not convene until 1:00 p.m. due to a snowstorm. A Military Department Panel was first. The panel consisted of four briefs, followed by a question and answer period. The briefs included the following:

[Introduction – “Department of Defense Transformation and Human Resources,”](#) presented by Ms. Gail McGinn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Plans).

[“Army personnel issues”](#), presented by Mr. Reginald Brown, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

[“Department of the Navy Human Resources Transformation,”](#) presented by Mr. William Navas, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

["Air Force personnel issues,"](#) presented by Lt Col Stephen Jones, Assistant Deputy for Force Management and Services, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Force Management and Personnel).

The Defense Manpower Data Center brief was not given due to the unavailability of a speaker because of the storm. The day concluded with an open public forum. CAPT Robert Miller, USN (Ret), spoke for two minutes, appealing to the Committee to consider “the ways that you might help service members behave honorably and even nobly toward members of the ‘opposite sex’.” The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

**On Friday, December 6, 2002,** the meeting opened at 8:30 a.m. The whole day was dedicated to Committee organization, and the Chair, LtGen Mutter, led the discussion. The first topic was substance: What questions does the Committee need to answer in the annual report? Topics should spring from the priorities Mr. Abell laid out (see above), the topics briefed by the Assistant Secretaries of Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and the charter. The Committee then discussed and agreed to use the framework at enclosure (3). In summary, the Committee’s three main areas of focus for the year will be women’s health, women’s retention, and the effects of deployment.

The Committee then discussed the metrics that COL Dailey outlined on the first day. Members requested the wording of the third metric be revised to “Provide sound advice to decision makers” or something to that effect.

Mr. Charles Abell returned for a question and answer period. He agreed with retention as key, more so than recruiting. When referring to the metrics, he stated that DoD does not want DACOWITS in sales, so going the extra step to try to convince the Department to implement DACOWITS’ recommendations is not something on which the Committee should be spending time. Also, he stated that there is value in focus groups; the Department receives info from military personnel and family members directly vice solely from the chain of command. Mr. Abell then discussed the installation visit letter. He noted that members should raise pertinent issues with the commander or deputy commander of the installation at the outbrief. If this is done, there is no need for a letter. If a letter is required, he need not be the signatory. In addition,

a personal thank you letter from members of the visiting team is always appropriate.

Dr. David Chu, Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), came for lunch and also answered some questions. He stated that the urgency of the request for information on the effort to improve ob/gyn care is because of the law that will allow military wives to choose off-base care beginning in December 2003. This is a satisfaction issue but also a cost issue. Other topics to think about include the housing DoD provides junior enlisted (which is not what college-seeking individuals necessarily like), spousal employment (70% of spouses work), and the role of women professionals in the Reserves (few women in the Army Guard; around 25% of the Army Reserve is women; Reserves as an alternative to active duty to join or remain in the military).

After lunch, LtGen Mutter went over the Committee schedule. The Committee agreed to its next meeting on January 16 and 17, 2003. Topics recommended for briefing include a US Marine Corps, US Coast Guard, and National Guard panel, the Army well-being program, the Navy Family Summit, a readiness panel, the quarterly Status of Forces brief given to the Under Secretary of Defense, researchers (e.g. Center for Naval Analysis, Army Research Institute, RAND, Defense Manpower Data Center), health care, and protocols. Members agreed that an educational trip would be useful. It was suggested that the Committee go to Norfolk in February for training; this trip will include testing of the focus group protocol as well. Exact dates are to be determined. Members are to forward their preferences and suggestions for installation visit sites to COL Dailey by Friday, December 13. Anyone wishing to go overseas should state that he/she has a valid passport. The Chair and the staff will then propose an installation visit schedule.

Organization was next. There will be no subcommittees at this time. LtGen Mutter will select a Vice Chair to assist her in her efforts and to assume duties when she is unable to fulfill them. There will be no expectation that the Vice Chair becomes the Chair after the Chair completes her term. The rotation of members will take care of itself. If members would like to end their service, it is requested they inform the Chair and the Military Director at any time for an emergency situation and by April 1<sup>st</sup> for less time-critical decisions so that there is plenty of time to select a relief for the new fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup>). Members will make site visits in teams of two. The staff proposed teams that will mix members based on military experience and hometowns.

Members briefly discussed what to do if approached by a Service member about an individual problem. Lastly, they talked about possible conflicts of interest and how to avoid them.

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Report submitted by

Report certified by

LCDR Shannon E. M. Thaeler, USN

LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret)

Operations Officer, DACOWITS

FY 2003 DACOWITS Chair

Attachments:

As stated