

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS) MEETING REPORT May 8-9, 2003

DACOWITS held a meeting May 8-9, 2003 at the DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City-National Airport, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA. Members and other attendees are listed in enclosures (1) and (2), respectively. The purpose of the meeting was to provide Committee members further background information on the Services/military in general and on specific issues the Committee is reviewing this year. It also provided time for Committee members to discuss installation visits and the annual report. The meeting was open to the public. The session on Thursday, May 8, 2003 from 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. was scheduled to be closed, but it remained open due to the unavailability of the scheduled speaker.

On **Thursday, May 8, 2003**, LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC, Retired, Chair, DACOWITS, opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. She welcomed everyone and introduced several people: Her Royal Highness Colonel Princess Aisha Bint al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Director, Directorate of Women's Affairs, Jordanian Armed Forces; Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs, new Ex-Officio to DACOWITS; Ms. Vickie McCall, Chair, DACOWITS 2000-2001; and Ms. Mary Wamsley, Chair, DACOWITS 1999. COL Denise Dailey, Military Director, DACOWITS, made several administrative remarks.

The Chair then led Committee time. During this time, members discussed the installation visits, specifically the process/logistics and the issues. On the whole, members said logistics went smoothly, and they were appreciative of support received. One member stated that using the command's laptop during the trip was difficult as it was unfamiliar. Several members agreed that it was easier to take notes by hand and then transcribe them to disk later. This does take a lot of time, they said. One member asked if someone could transcribe the hand-written notes. The Chair responded that anything can be done with money, but the Committee had to review how it wanted to spend its resources. She also welcomed other suggestions and alternatives.

Members moved on to a discussion of the issues they heard while on the seven installation visits they conducted so far. The Chair organized the discussion under this year's three pillars" or topic areas: retention, effects of deployment, and health care. The following is a list of members' comments.

Retention

Reasons for staying:

High level of satisfaction in general with the military

Job security, particularly for junior personnel. The private sector is weak.

Strong sense of community

Strong commitment to mission

Time invested. Those with 12-20 years feel locked in. Those with under 10 years and over 20 stay as long as it is fun and challenging.

Educational opportunities. Can get a degree while in the Service. Leads to advancement/ promotion.

Medical benefits while in and after retirement

Reasons for leaving:

Frustration with accessing the health care system

Stress with conflict of job and children

For some female officers, service incompatible with family or even a serious relationship

Child care hours availability, conflict with schedule

Lack of strong mentoring program. Lot of lip service to mentoring, but not enough action.

Effects of Deployment

Uncertainty of deployment stressful – Service member says goodbye, then comes back home that day. Member anxious to go, but motivation wanes while waiting.

Short notice difficult, but all preparations are there.

Leadership influences use of available services – knowledge of services and time off to use them.

Getting information to spouses difficult

Class system - enlisted spouses feel officer spouses unapproachable, including during volunteer functions.

Parents and in-laws seeking more information

Not enough debriefing of deployed after they return, especially with Special Forces and Military Police

Family care plans need to cover gaps.

For Reserves, lack of information for families living in a state other than that of the drilling location

Greater need for longer hours at childcare centers during increased OPTEMPO

Health Care

In general, care is excellent. "Better than it used to be."

Technical quality of care is very good.

Caregivers don't treat patients with personalized care, tailoring the message to the patient. Patients feel as if they're part of a mass production line.

Access is difficult. Delay in getting appointment. Once appointment obtained, care is good.

Misunderstanding of what families must pay on medical bills leads to non-payment and possible loss of good credit.

TRICARE options complicated. Forms too.

Policies change when transferring from one region to another.

Not all services offered on base, so required to go off base.

Military and family members seem to expect lots more from the health care system now than in the past.
Is there greater stress or training? Perhaps it's a cultural shift.

Privacy issue – patients want greater privacy, including in the physical structure of facilities.

Disconnect between day care standards and medical standards – Day care facility won't take back a child even after medical says the child is fine.

After a short break, two speakers gave presentations and answered members' questions:

- [Work/Family Conflict Issues for Soldiers and Families](#)," presented by Dr. Doris Durand, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

- [TRICARE 101](#),” Ms. S. Dian Lawhon, MHR, APR, Director, Communications & Customer Service, TRICARE Management Activity.

Therefore, it doesn't seem an appropriate time for DACOWITS to intervene. However, DACOWITS' involvement may be more relevant in the future.

Members discussed their outreach in their local communities. Senator J. P. Duniphan was a speaker at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, SD for Women's History Month. Mrs. Catherine Aspy was interviewed for a local newspaper article on the advancements women have made in the military and the challenges these women face with families. She will also give a speech to local veterans and families on Memorial Day.

The Chair then reminded members that they were appointed for three-year terms. There will not be a forced rotation to ensure 1/3 of the members are new annually. However, the Chair did ask members to notify her or COL Dailey if outside commitments would not allow them to continue to serve after this first year.

LtGen Mutter continued by asking members what additional briefings or data they thought was necessary before beginning the annual report. Members talked briefly about non-deployability and pregnancy rates. The Chair asked them to write down their questions/requests on the posted paper. The DACOWITS staff will forward the questions to appropriate personnel and forward answers once received.

Two briefs then followed. Each included a question and answer period.

- [National Guard Family Program](#),” presented by Ms. Dorothy J. Ogilvy-Lee, Chief, Family Program, National Guard Bureau.
- [Marine Corps Quality of Life Programs](#),” presented by Maj Pete Baumgarten, Operations Analyst, Personal & Family Readiness Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

After a short break, the Honorable Charles Abell, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), sat down for a discussion with the members. Members summarized for Mr. Abell the information they gained from the installation visits. Mr. Abell provided some additional information from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) level. In regards to health care, he mentioned that the new TRICARE contract placed greater emphasis on customer service. Constant education on TRICARE at the local level is also necessary. The laws on military health care are thick; then there are the implementation policies. Thus, yes, TRICARE is a complicated system. That is why it is so important for the local commands to get involved to educate Service members and to help them resolve their issues. Additionally, the military provides about 1/3 of its health care in-house. The goal for medical facilities is to optimize their facilities and personnel. If a facility is suboptimized, it should bring in more beneficiaries for two

reasons: cost and medical proficiency (keeping skills sharp).

In the discussions, Mr. Abell also talked about deployments and effects on family. He asked members to visit the DoD schools on their installation visits and ask about the programs the schools have for kids. DoD did request additional funds in the emergency supplemental legislation for extended childcare hours due to increased OPTEMPO. However, Mr. Abell noted that when the Services have limited resources and they must decide between weapons and childcare, weapons often win. The DACOWITS report should help to point out the necessity of increased childcare hours. As for statistics from this most recent deployment cycle, the Department is in the process of gathering lessons learned. However, at the OSD level, these will be big picture lessons. Other commands and the Services will likely be putting together best practices, but they will not necessarily percolate up to the OSD level. Statistics are decentralized. For example, the Department did not ask the Services to keep a record of how many people were either not deployed or separated from the service due to an incomplete or invalid family care plan. DoD policy states the care plan must be in place so that members are deployable at all times. Local commanders ultimately decide whether their Service members are complying and whether or not they need to be discharged.

In response to a question about recruiting, Mr. Abell stated that the Army and Air Guard are a little behind in their recruiting goals, but that was seasonal and expected. The active duty and other Reserve components are on target with recruiting goals or a little ahead. However, Mr. Abell cautioned that after the Gulf War of 1991, the Department saw effects three years later. Therefore, the Department will watch recruiting closely. Retention is also high at this time.

The Chair led the final Committee time session of the day. She reiterated that all the Services, except for the Air Force, would have presented briefs on their family support/quality of life programs by the end of the May meeting. She asked members to review the four-page paper the Air Force provided on its quality of life program. She also asked members to review and be prepared to provide feedback on Caliber Associates' (the research contractor's) interim report, which was to be briefed the next day. A quick discussion then ensued on installation visits. One member recommended decreasing the tour length and increasing the number of focus groups, while another suggested adding visits. The Chair asked members to think about what the benefits would be in relation to the costs.

The meeting adjourned for the day at approximately 5:00 p.m.

On Friday, May 9, 2003, the meeting convened at 8:30 a.m. It began with a Reserve Panel, including a presentation and question and answer period.

- [Reserve Component Contributions to National Defense](#).” Moderator: Dr. Winkler, Deputy

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Personnel, Reserve Affairs). Panel Members: Mr. Wayne Spruell, Principal Director Manpower and Personnel; Mr. Rich Krimmer, Director for Reserve Component Military Personnel Policy; and Mr. Dan Kohner, Director Manpower Requirements and Programs.

After a break, a second panel began: Best Practices, Civilian OB/GYN Hospital and Clinics. Two reputable area care providers talked about their facilities' best practices in providing obstetric and gynecological care. The first briefer represented a civilian hospital while the second represented a mid-wife center.

- [Women's Health and the Armed Services](#)," presented by Dr. Craig Winkel, Professor and Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Georgetown University Hospital.
- BirthCare and Women's Health," presented by Ms. Marsha Jackson, CNM, Co-Director, BirthCare and Women's Health. Ms. Jackson used slides; therefore, a PowerPoint brief is unavailable. (Slides were pictures of the center.)

The morning concluded with another presentation:

- [Department of Defense Women's Research on Health and Performance of Military Women](#)," presented by LTC Karl Friedl, Research Area Director, Military Operational Medicine Research Program, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.

The members broke for lunch from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. At about 12:40, the Honorable Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, joined the members for a 20-minute discussion. (The dining room was open to the public.) He started off by stating that the previous night, he had seen the "Day in the Life of the U.S. Armed Forces" photographic exhibit on display at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial. He praised the exhibit and stated that some of the photos that struck him most were ones of female Service members. He said that women played an integral role in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and he was proud of them.

Dr. Wolfowitz mentioned that when the DACOWITS charter was under review in early 2002, he sat down with female officers and enlisted and asked them about DACOWITS. Some women felt that DACOWITS did not do enough for the women who were already in the military/ that the Committee did not take on issues that were of current interest to them. This is why Dr. Wolfowitz added recruitment and retention" to the forefront of the Committee's charge of areas on which to provide advice and recommendations in the new charter (created March 2002, with the current version filed in December 2002). Additionally, Dr. Wolfowitz stated that he purposely added families to the Committee's purview under the new charter. Prior to this, there was no committee charged with looking at family issues. He wondered out loud if there should, perhaps, be another

committee that looked at family issues.

Members briefly relayed some of their observations from their installation visits regarding health care and deployment to the Deputy Secretary. Dr. Wolfowitz also talked briefly about transformation, noting that with the review of basing and deployments, maybe the Department should take a look at the effects such decisions will have on families. He also stated that he had confidence that the new Superintendent at the Air Force Academy would take appropriate action to resolve the issues at the school.

After lunch, there were two more presentations.

- [Navy Family Team Summit](#),” presented by RDML (Sel) Marc Purcell, Assistant Commander, Navy Personnel Command, Fleet Support.
- [Family Support During Deployment: Overview of Research](#),” presented by Dr. Bradford Booth, Senior Associate, Caliber Associates, Inc.

The Chair once again hosted Committee time. Committee members provided feedback to Caliber Associates on its interim report. Caliber will incorporate the recommendations into its final report.

Lt Gen Mutter next discussed the road ahead. Installation visits will continue through July. In July, Caliber Associates will submit its second interim report with women’s health as the topic, and the DACOWITS staff will forward it to the members via e-mail. In September, Caliber Associates will submit its third interim report with women’s retention as the topic. There will also be a business meeting in September. Members agreed to the dates September 4-5, 2003. The basic outline for the meeting is 1) discussion of installation visits, 2) Caliber’s briefing of the interim reports, and 3) working through/drafting the final report. To help members draft the report and build consensus, the Committee will use a computerized network. Each Committee member will be able to input his/her ideas on each subject, and the program will consolidate all of the ideas. After the September meeting, a volunteer subcommittee will flesh out the report. The Committee agreed to October 27-28 as tentative dates for another meeting, if required. The Chair then asked Committee members to think about alternatives to present the final report: sign the report and send it to OSD, brief it to Dr. Chu and Mr. Abell, brief the Military Department Manpower & Reserve Affairs Secretaries and/or Service Personnel Chiefs, deliver it to Congress, and/or release a press statement. A couple of members asked to see if there is an event that releasing the report could be tied to or a time that should be avoided for whatever reason.

Finally, COL Dailey talked about the installation visits. She stated that members are doing a great job on their visits. She then asked that they review some criteria that Caliber Associates provided to help improve the visit products. The Chair asked the members who have upcoming visits to let

the staff know if they desired to have a scribe accompany them and help them produce the products.

The meeting concluded with an open public forum. No members of the public spoke, but staff distributed a letter from Mrs. Elaine Donnelly to the members, per Mrs. Donnelly's request.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Report submitted by

LCDR Shannon E. M. Thaeler, USN

Operations Officer, DACOWITS

Attachments:

As stated

Report certified by

LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret)

FY 2003 DACOWITS Chair