

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

November 20-21, 2003

DACOWITS held a meeting November 20-21, 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 general purpose of the meeting was to finalize the annual report and to set the course for the next year. The meeting was open to the public.

On **Thursday, November 20, 2003**, LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC, Retired, Chair, DACOWITS, opened the meeting at 8:38 a.m. She welcomed and introduced a new DACOWITS member, Mrs. Margaret (Muggy) Hoffmann, and presented her a DACOWITS pin. The DACOWITS Points of Contact (POCs) then introduced themselves. Dr. Lynda Davis, member, then expressed appreciation for all Service members as they fight the global war on terrorism; she stated, "Our hearts and prayers are with them." She also thanked the POCs and staff for all of their assistance.

LtGen Mutter began Committee time with a review of several parts of the 2003 report. She read her transmittal letter, and members asked for a hard copy of the letter. Members took a quick look at the Executive Summary. LtGen Mutter informed members this was their last opportunity to provide any changes. Then came a discussion on the report's recommendations. The Committee agreed to several administrative changes to the recommendations made in October and also voted on two substantive word changes:

i. DACOWITS recommends that DoD increase its efforts to reach its goal of providing the currently estimated need of child care spaces, as identified by the Office of Children and Youth, OSD.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain

ii. DACOWITS recommends that all MTF health care providers be trained in a customer service-oriented model of patient service and care which includes sufficient time and opportunity for patient-provider dialogue that conveys the importance of patient needs, especially those of junior enlisted members.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain

Mrs. Constance Horner had given a proxy to COL D. Ladd Pattillo, and Ms. Margaret Robson had given a proxy to Ms. Virginia Rowell. LtGen Mutter then asked members to sign the cover letter, which will be the first page of the report.

Mr. Dan Kohner, Director, Manpower Requirements and Programs, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), then presented a brief to the Committee entitled **“Employment of Reserve Component Forces & Lessons Learned.”**

CAPT Katherine Surman, Clinical and Program Director, Patient Advocacy, Medical Ethics, and Women’s Health Issues, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), followed with her brief, “Family Centered Care/Obstetrical Challenge.” Committee members and the speakers had time for questions and answers.

After lunch, LtGen Mutter once again led Committee time. The discussion centered on lessons learned from 2003 and the Committee’s 2004 activities. First, members looked at the draft 2004 timeline. They agreed to not conduct focus groups year round, i.e. not in October 2004, to not decrease the number of focus groups, to expand research, perhaps looking into private industry practices, and to provide more input on required briefings.

Next, the members discussed the report writing process, using the lessons learned survey provided to members as a guide. Members thought the length of the report was about right, and the findings preceding the recommendations helped the flow. In general, the Committee decided they did not need to use Meetingworks to edit the report. Rather, they felt they could break into teams and have each team edit a section of the draft report. Then all members could get together and discuss and settle on the changes. The same teams could then write the findings and recommendations appropriate to their section of the report and present them to the full Committee for vote. This new process may require an initial three-day meeting in September but may also delete the requirement for an October meeting. LtGen Mutter said she would work with the staff and present a report- writing plan as the time approached.

Committee members also stated they would like the research contractor to provide one interim report in May covering all research reviewed to date on the topic areas. The interim report would not include focus group data or findings. The members would like the contractor to provide the draft final report, with the focus group data and analysis, two weeks prior to the September meeting. They also asked that the contractor provide a list of additional quotes that the members may substitute, at their discretion, for those already in the report.

The Committee then moved on to installation visits. Generally, members agreed a two-day visit is appropriate, and they prefer the tour before the focus groups. They also mentioned that they would like to see some facilities vice get just a windshield tour of the installation. Since this may take additional time, perhaps members would conduct only four focus groups. Most agreed that the in-brief should include an overview of the mission and a focus on the issues. COL Dailey said the staff would ask the members in advance of their trips for their preferences on all of these issues, as well as time between focus groups and with whom they'd like to have lunch.

Members then discussed participation in the meetings. They stated they would find it helpful to have senior enlisted representatives in attendance at the meetings to give their perspective and input. POCs could, perhaps, have senior enlisted personnel attend in their place from time to time, and the Committee could invite senior enlisted personnel to lunch. The members also talked about better integrating the POCs in the meetings and in the meeting set-up. Placing the POCs at the tables would likely make the U-shape too large. At the next meeting, the staff can set the POCs on the sides of the U once again, as long as the room will accommodate it.

The Committee returned to the topic of installation visits. Use of tape recorders was not specifically vetoed. When used, members would like a short training session on how to use them. The members present stated they will not use Meetingworks to conduct focus groups this year. They may use a professional scribe (contractor who will take all of the notes). Each team will need to inform the staff if either Meetingworks (or similar contractor) or a scribe is desired. Ms. Virginia Rowell offered an alternative to get information from participants who do not want to speak out loud during focus groups: provide all participants a hard copy of the protocol. Then participants can, if they desire, provide written input. Members would then add this input to their electronic notes before turning in the notes. Each team will decide if they would like to use this option on their visits. Further, members present stated they do not need the installations to provide a computer during their visit. Each team will need to inform the staff if a computer is desired. Members next reviewed the list of possible installations to visit in 2004. POCs provided comments on how they selected the sites they proposed.

At 4:45 p.m., LtGen Mutter opened the public forum. The staff distributed copies of an e-mail from LtCol Karen Groth to members, POCs, and the public, per the author's request, regarding leave for adoption purposes.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:50 p.m.

On **Friday, November 21, 2003**, the meeting convened at 8:34 a.m. For a majority of the day, the Committee devoted its time to discussing the topics they would undertake for 2004. They drafted topic statements, guidance for protocols, and requests for information. POCs helped in this endeavor.

COL E. Casey Wardinsky, Office of Economic & Manpower Analysis, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy, presented a brief he and Mr. Luke Gallagher prepared, entitled “[A Look at Female Army Officer Retention.\(pdf\)](#)” Members again had time to ask questions.

Members quickly reviewed several issues. First was the hard copy of LtGen Mutter’s transmittal letter to the 2003 report. LtGen Mutter also asked members to advise the staff soonest if they wanted more than one copy of the final report. Members again reviewed the 2004 timeline. They settled on February 5-6, 2004 as dates for the next meeting with training for new members on February 4. They decided that the new members should receive focus group training, but they needed no more than ½ hour of focus group lessons learned. Members also felt that new members did not need an orientation trip such as they had to Norfolk in February 2003; however, they did feel that the new members should participate in the protocol testing in order to practice their focus group facilitation and note-taking. Members finished providing input to the installation sites they would like to visit. The staff will take all input and publish a final list of visit sites.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Report submitted by

LCDR Shannon E. M. Thaeler, USN

Operations Officer, DACOWITS

Report certified by

LtGen Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret)

FY 2003-04 DACOWITS Chair