

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

May 27 and 28, 2009

DACOWITS held a meeting May 27 and 28, 2009, at the DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City, National Airport, 300 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia. Members and public present during the meeting are at enclosures one and two. Materials used during the meeting are at enclosure three.

Wednesday May 27, 2009

Dr. Mary Nelson, Chairperson DACOWITS, opened the meeting at 0845 a.m. She made the introductions of the members, support staff and participants. The Chair discussed that the issues the Committee would be accomplishing over the next two days. The primary purpose of the meeting was for subject matter presentations regarding the two topics for Installation visits and fact gathering: Women's roles during OIF/OEF deployments, and whether the military is meeting the needs of the Wounded Warrior families. Additionally, the Committee, Support Staff and Services collaborated on the upcoming summer surge of Installation visits for this year's topics. The Committee reviewed the designated sites, re-visited the agenda, and composition of the focus groups, and discussed with the Members how they can leverage the visits to gather facts and findings for useful recommendations for the Department in both topic areas.

At 9:00 a.m. was a subject matter expertise (SME) presentation: Update on DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office's (SAPRO) - comprehensive policy and programs implementation to ensure the safety, dignity and well-being of all members of the Armed Forces. Speaker: LtCol Nate Galbreath, SAPRO, sexual assault (SME). Key points follow:

- SAPRO is within OSD, and each Service has its own policy in addition to DoD policy.
- SAPRO covers prevention, victim care, and system accountability.
- Metrics of improvement were discussed as well as the highly under reporting of sexual assault.

- Response team includes: Those who can take restricted report - Sexual assault response coordinator - Victim advocates - Medical and mental health providers.
 - o Those who cannot take restricted report: Chaplains (receives privileged information) - Unit commanders - Investigators - Judge advocates

- DoD strategic goals of prevention: Increase reporting - Decrease incidents.
- Changing DoD culture: Duty to prevent and encourage reporting.
- DoD prevention strategy:
 - o DoD Prevention Steering Committee (civilian and military experts).
 - o Spectrum of Prevention.
 - o Focus on knowledge, skills, behaviors.
 - o Active bystander intervention (teach people to recognize potential problems and to intervene safely).
 - o Social marketing (e.g., posters modeled after those of mystrength.org).
 - o Supporting websites (myduty.mil).

Mrs. Balzano suggested that the Committee collect data on SAPRO materials, etc. on each installation visit.

10:00 Break

At 10:15 a.m. was a SME presentation: *The Lonely Soldier – The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* book regarding sexual assault in the OIF/OEF Theater by Helen Benedict, British author. Speaker: LtCol Nate Galbreath, Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), sexual assault SME.

- This book shares real stories of five of 16 female warriors mentioned who were clear victims of sexual assault or harassment.
- The SME discussed the inaccuracy of the book's statistics, and examples of inaccuracies, as well as the intended message and perceptions offered by the author.
- Data problems included:
 - o References mostly newspaper stories.
 - o Minimal use of scientific data.
 - o Citations with poor or absent support/data source.
 - o Media distortions and errors.
- The SME discussed the Department's measures in addressing the problem to include:
 - o Screen out recruits with records of domestic or sexual violence.

- Expel all personnel who have been found guilty of domestic or sexual violence while serving.
- Advertise loud and clear that rape is a war crime and a form of torture, and no more tolerated within military than in international courts.
- Hold commanders accountable for assaults that occur within their units
- Educate officers properly about sexual violence.
- Improve training in prevention and understanding of sexual assault for all recruits, enlisted and officer. Improve quality of training – eliminate current films and scripts.
- Reform military handling of sexual abuse to include a task force establishment, databases, tracking mechanisms, lawyers trained in sexual assault.
- Include sexual assault counselors in the combat stress expert teams already in place. These counselors should be trained in civilian rape crisis centers, not by the military alone. Ideally, they should be independent of the military, like the Red Cross. Ensure adequate licensed clinical providers (social workers, psychiatrists, etc.).
- Provide a toll free number of a civilian organization where female soldiers can report rape and sexual assault to include Military OneSource, and RAINN – online reporting and assistance for military members (is in planning stage).
- Revise definition of rape to include anyone who uses rank.
- Restricted reporting: Let victims tell friends and still keep their reports confidential.

At 11:15 a.m. was a SME presentation by the Office of the General Counsel with a discussion on the DoD Women’s Assignment Policy, and its applicability as related to OIF/OEF, Lionesses documentary, and a Defense Link article on a USMC female gunner. Concurrent Q&A session.

- Congress used to have statutory limitations on what women could do in military:
 - Congress repealed these a while ago (around 1994).
 - Congress has two laws on books that impact.
 - Both reporting rules:
 - Navy submarine rule (Title 10 of United States code, section 6035).
 - If you are going to change this policy, you need to notify Congress and wait a 30 day period of time.

- Direct ground combat policy (Title 10 of United States code, section 652).
 - If you are going to change this, give Congress notice and wait period of time -30 days.
- Now only restrictions are *policy* (DoD and Services):
 - Direct ground combat assignment policy (2 page policy).
 - Used to be based on risk rule.
 - In 1994, Sec Def changed risk rule to direct ground combat.
 - Defines ground combat.
 - Rule is: Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except women cannot be assigned to those units below brigade level whose primary mission is direct ground combat (paraphrased).
 - DoD policy for all Services, but branches can add certain limitations for their own policy:
 - Navy has used limitation regarding costly to have separate quarters.
 - Army has used collocation limitation.
 - Army went from division to brigade centric.
 - All Services have used special operations limitation.
- Assignment versus employment/use:
 - Years following policy change (mid to late 1990's) were peace time, therefore based on doctrine (the way we think they will be employed in war time)
 - Utilization in OIF/OEF utilization was discussed.
- Nelson - Practice not following spirit of policy, even if not actually violating policy.
- Balzano – I agree that policy spirit not in practice, but I disagree that policy should be changed so that women can be in combat without any limitations. We had a reason to have this policy, and we shouldn't change it just because it's not being used properly. I think it's wrong that they're being used in this way. How does that commander make a decision for his group and they run into women who could be enemy combatants. It seems to me that they've taken the easy way out by using women in these combat situations. Do we need to find Iraqi females who

will fill these roles to search Iraqi women? I really resist the notion of allowing women to fill these roles.

- Lassus – The benefits and awards can be changed so that these women are given what they deserve without changing the assignment policy.
- Torres – Policy needs to be reviewed, but at the very least commanders need to be educated on the policy. The education piece is not there; they don't know.
- Balzano – These women are not trained or prepared to be in these roles.

12:00 Lunch

At 1:00 p.m. was a showing of the *The Lioness*, a PBS documentary with respect to the female Marines and Soldiers attached to ground units in Theater.

At 2:30 p.m. was a follow on discussion on the *Lioness* documentary:

- Nelson – At VA screening event of *The Lioness*, four of the women in the movie were there in person, and they were much more positive than in the movie.
- A discussion ensue with respect to a proposed congressional amendment that included collocation phrasing which had implications regarding a withdrawal of females from Theater.
- Denman commented on the quality of the film and a possible agenda by the film maker.
- An Attendee responded: The film maker is an anthropologist at NYU and was trying to capture what women are doing in Iraq.
- Balzano – I just think it's important to have an open debate without the pressure of immediate implications.
- Denman – Do you think with this new set of questions that it will bring forth the generational differences and the willingness to jump right in?
- Nelson – I don't know what we're going to get. I was surprised by the overwhelming positive response to women being able to serve in combat.
- Denman – I'm surprised too.

3:15 Break

At 3:30 p.m. an AAR was conducted on the Bethesda Naval Hospital visit, with a tweaking, and adjustments of the instruments. The Committee was very positive regarding the visit. Committee and ICFI deliverables followed.

4: 15 Break

At 4:30 p.m. was a schedule opening for a Public Open Forum. There was no further input from the attendees in the audience.

At 5:00p.m. Dr. Nelson, Chair concluded the day.

Thursday May 28, 2009

Dr. Mary Nelson, Chairperson DACOWITS, opened the meeting at 0845 a.m. She made the introductions of the members, support staff and participants, and administrative remarks.

At 9:00 a.m. Lynda Davis, PhD gave the following presentation: The Foundations of Care, Management, and Transition Support for Recovering Service Members and Their Families. Review of report to Congress. Key points included in the presentation/discussion:

- *Moving Beyond Survive to Thrive – What Wounded Warriors and their families have taught us about the journey from recovery and rehabilitation to reintegration*
- The Warrior/Family journey:
 - What the survival journey often feels like.
 - No plan/map.
 - No navigator.
 - No central/accessible information.
- o The response:
 - What has been done to reform the journey.
 - Implement comprehensive, consistent approach to across providers/sites/phases.
 - Reduce overlap in case management/ensure accountability.
 - Eliminate confusion in roles for patient, family/caregiver and provider.
 - Expand knowledge of/referral to non-governmental resources/services.
 - Recommendations made in the congressional report:
 - 10-step process with 4 cornerstones
 - 4 Cornerstones
 - o Recovery team
 - o Recovery coordinator
 - o Recovery plan
 - o National resource directory
 - 10 steps
 - o Step 1: Screening

- Step 2: Assigning
- Step 3: Coordinating
- Step 4: Assessment
- Step 5: Planning
- Step 6: Supporting
- Step 7: Evaluating
- Step 8: Processing (e.g., disability rating)
- Step 9: Transitioning
- Step 10: Reviewing
- The opportunity:
 - “The ultimate vision of transition should be the continuation and fulfillment of a quality life for our nation’s veterans”.
 - What is thriving and factors that support thriving?
- Family support ideas:
 - Family life plan.
 - Best practice center/clearinghouse.

At 9:30 a.m. Susan Roberts, Office of Transition Policy and Care Coordination provided the following presentation: Update from the Office of Transition Policy and Care Coordination (TPCC), programs, RCC initiative, and corresponding pending legislation.

- TPCC background and mission
- Organizational structure
 - Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
 - Transition Policy
 - Compensation & Benefits
 - Program and Budget
 - Care Coordination
 - Transition Policy (DES)
 - Disability Evaluation System (DES)
 - Provides interagency liaison with VA on DES
 - Administers the Disability Advisory Council (DAC)
 - Transition assistance program (TAP)
 - TurboTap (website)
- Programs and budget directorate
- Care coordination directorate:

- Recovery Care Coordinator (RCC) and a Comprehensive Recovery Plan.
- 31 RCCs in 13 locations within Military Departments' Wounded Warrior Programs.
- Additional 100 Army AW2 Advocates trained as RCCs.
- 1:20-30 is typical RCC to WW ratio, and planning on 1:40 ratio
- Care, management, transition process:
 - Category 1 and 2 covered by DoD, category 3 covered by VA.
 - Category 1 will have support from multi-disciplinary team and will likely return to duty within 180 days.
 - Category 2 (unlikely to return to duty within 180 days) has Wounded Warrior Program and RCC.
 - Category 3 will get FRCC (Federal Recovery Care Coordinator).

At 10:00 a.m. was a presentation by Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Maj Gen (Ret), RN, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs titled: Update on VA programs and initiatives, The Economy and its Impact on Women and their Families, and the newly established Interagency Council on Women and Girls.

- Mission and role of the Center for Women Veterans:

○ Mission

- Ensure women veterans have access to VA benefits and services on par with male veterans.
- Ensure VA programs are responsive to the gender-specific needs of women veterans.
- Perform joint outreach to improve women veterans' awareness of VA services, benefits and eligibility criteria.
- Ensure that women veterans are treated with dignity and respect

○ Role

- Serve as resource center
- Recommend policy and legislative proposals to Secretary
- Work with VA's three Administrations (VBA, NCA, VHA)
- Coordinate Advisory Committee on Women Veterans site visits and reports

- Coordination and collaboration with other agencies:

- Other federal agencies
 - State agencies
 - State women veterans coordinators
 - Congressional members and staffers
 - Policy and legislative groups
 - Veterans service organizations
 - County and private agencies
 - Other women's groups
- What women veterans tell us they need and want:
- Recognition and respect
 - Employment
 - Suitable housing
 - Access to and receipt of high quality health care
 - Childcare options
 - Opportunities for social interaction
 - Want to make a difference
- Recent Center events and initiatives:
- Congressional wreath laying ceremony to honor our nation's servicewomen and women Veterans
 - Economy and its Impact on Women and their Families Luncheon/Discussion.
 - Advisory Committee on Women Veterans – annual site visit June 8-12 at Dallas VA Medical Center.
 - White House Interagency Council on Women and Girls:
 - Established by Presidential Executive Order on March 11, 2009
 - Purpose – ensure that American women and girls are treated fairly in all matters of public policy
 - Priority initiatives
 - Economic security
 - Work family balance
 - Violence against women
 - Health care
 - Tasking – consider all policies and programs within each agency, and review programs, think about ways to cooperate with other agencies, share best practices, and list ways Council can help

1030 Break

At 1045 a.m. Dr. Nelson (DACOWITS Chair) and Dr. Trowell-Harris presented an AAR on the Congressional Committee on Veteran's Affairs Roundtable discussion ("Growing Needs of Women Veterans – is the VA Ready"?).

At 1115 a.m. was a review of the upcoming summer surge sites, assigned members, and agenda. Collaboration included the DACOWITS Support Staff, the Committee and ICF Staff.

12:00 Lunch

At 1:00 p.m. was a brief discussion. /questions with the Committee, and Service POCs and SMEs with respect to meetings topics or upcoming site visits.

At 1:15p.m. was a presentation and discussion led by Morton G. Ender, Professor, USMA, and author of the book: American Soldiers in Iraq: McSoldiers or Innovative Professionals, specifically surrounding the chapter "Real G.I. Janes: American Female Soldier Attitudes from Iraq".

- Background
 - o Iraq study (22 page paper survey)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom II
 - Summer 2004 in Iraq
 - N=1,000
 - Women were 12.4% (118) of the respondents
 - o Kuwait study
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom I (February-July 2003)
 - July 2003 in Kuwait
 - N=185
 - Women were 13.2% of the respondents
 - o Haiti study
 - Operation Uphold Democracy (Sep-Dec 1994)
 - February 1995 at Fort Drum
 - N=522
 - Women were 6.1% of the respondent
- Comparison of male and female soldiers in Haiti, Kuwait, Iraq (findings presented of women compared to men):

- Very few differences between men and women on their attitudes across a number of variables measured all the way back to WWII (differences only are presented below, otherwise little or no difference between genders)
 - Demographics
 - Women more political affiliations
 - Women more non-combat arms
 - Women less likely to be married, fewer children
 - Morale
 - Women lower for Kuwait unit
 - Preparation for deployment
 - No differences
 - Work day
 - Males more hours in Kuwait/Haiti, but equal in Iraq (12-14 hour work days were typical)
 - Women took more days off (this is following policy to take a day off each week)
 - Job satisfaction
 - Women felt least knowledgeable about senior leaders
 - Foreign issues
 - Women more trust and easier to work with foreign nationals
 - Uses of the Armed Forces
 - Women have narrower view of the uses of the armed forces
 - Peacekeeping and future roles and missions (differences by gender in areas listed in briefing)
 - Social and domestic issues
 - Women more liberal on social issues (except prayer in public school)
 - Similar on values (women less supportive of draft – *note*: universal national service means drafting both genders)
- Comparing deaths in OIF:
- Women serve and women die in the military
 - As of October 6, 2007, 3807 American deaths resulted in OIF
 - 84 of them were women (2.2% of the total deaths)
 - Women deaths more likely Army
 - Women suffered more non-hostile and unknown deaths
 - Other comparisons made and presented on slide 8 of briefing
- Discussion with respect to the comparison of attitudes toward roles of women in military.

At 1:45 p.m. Dr. Patricia Hayes, Strategic, Chief Consultant, Women Veterans Health, Strategic Health spoke on Comprehensive Health Care for Women Veterans. :

- Mission
- Organization of WVHSHG
 - o Three main focus areas
 - Reproductive health
 - Comprehensive health
 - Women's health education
- Changing demographics
 - o Number of women Veterans enrolled expected to double in next five years, and this rapid growth will continue.
 - o Young female Veterans may need VA health benefits more than men (for reproductive health, family planning, etc.).
 - o Women veterans are younger than male veterans.
- Underutilization by women
- Fragmented primary care
 - o Women's general health and gender-specific health care often handled separately.
- Quality differences
 - o Higher quality (based on screening/testing milestones) than private health and Medicare.
 - o Women treated in VA less quality than men (based on same screening/testing milestones).
- Implementation, initiatives and goals of comprehensive primary care for women Veterans.
- Discussion surrounding the role of the Women Veterans Program Manager

2:45 Break

At 3:00 p.m. ICF review of the rules of engagement for conducting the upcoming focus groups.

At 3:30 p.m., culminating discussions amongst the Committee to finalize the upcoming summer surge and dividing areas of responsibility for receiving summer data, synthesizing and preparing the final SECDEF report. Participants: Committee, ICFI, DACOWITS Support Staff.

At 5:00 p.m. Dr. Nelson made final remarks and adjourned the meeting for the day.



Report Submitted by
Col Emma K. Coulson, USA
Military Director, DACOWITS



Report Certified by
Dr. Mary Nelson
DACOWITS Chair

Attachments as Stated

DACOWITS MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE
Committee Members Present 27 May 2009

Dr. Mary Nelson
Mrs. Denise Balzano
Diana Denman
Col Torres
Mrs. Lassus
Mrs. Santiago

Members Absent

None

Members Present 28 May 2009

Dr. Mary Nelson
Mrs. Denise Balzano
Diana Denman
Col Torres
Mrs. Lassus
Mrs. Santiago

Members Absent

None