

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

**June 3, 2010**

DACOWITS held a meeting June 3, 2010, at the DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City, National Airport, 300 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

The meeting was opened by the Designated Federal Officer, Lt Col Rose Jourdan. The DACOWITS Chair, LTG (USA Ret) Claudia Kennedy welcomed everyone, made administrative remarks, and asked people attending the meeting and the Committee members to introduce themselves. Each person had this opportunity to raise the issue they thought might be considered by DACOWITS. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Committee's vision, perspective, and determine focus areas for the year. A list of members and public present during the meeting are at enclosures one and two.

Committee members introduced themselves and each gave a short auto-biographical sketch of their professional careers, to include what they expected from DACOWITS and what they felt they could contribute to DACOWITS' success. Seven of the nine members have served on active duty, one is a military spouse and another works with legal issues affecting women and families.

The following areas of interest were mentioned:

- How women are assigned in the military.
- Desire for greater clarification on ground combat policies concerning employment of women.
- Whether the Army is capturing the new areas of assignment in which women are serving.
- Behavioral health care has not addressed matters like mental health and other psychological issues, which are important areas.
- How does DACOWITS remain relevant as a committee and provide advice on assignment policies pertaining to women?
- Readiness starts with achieving and maintaining good health. Since there is a scarcity of research dealing with women's health, a member of the audience stressed the importance of funding research on women-specific health matters. Understanding how the current combat environment and policies affect women impacts readiness.
- Ensuring all the issues discussed in DACOWITS meetings are addressed.
- Ensuring women have access to key assignments so they are competitive for promotion.
- Importance of clarifying the assignment policy for women in the Army.

LTG (Ret) Kennedy provided a brief history of DACOWITS. (Attachment 1)

Col (Ret) Torres reviewed the 2009 DACOWITS report and addressed the following points:

- Although many women have been exposed to combat, much of the equipment was not made for women and is ill-fitting. Thus, the equipment may not be as effective as when worn by a male and may make women more susceptible to injury.

- Since today's combat environment is extremely fluid and often has no defined battle lines, women should receive training on weapons such as machine guns and similar equipment. Women are currently operating these weapons on an ad hoc basis.
- All of the women interviewed who participated in combat, were proud to have fought.
- Many in America think women are not involved in actual combat. However, they are and at times have fought side by side with men.
- Women who participated in combat operations feel their combat exposure has positively influenced their careers.
- Women should be able to fill any role they are qualified for.
- Once female assignment policies are refined or changed, these policies should be taught in all the Professional Military Education (PME) courses to ensure commanders know what billets they can assign women to.

Further discussion centered on RAND's "Assessing the Assignment Policy for Army Women" report, to include: assignment policy; collocation; creating sustainable policies to assist women; need for buy in from all levels of leadership; and training for women. (Attachment 2)

The next major topic discussed was areas of interest and how to organize the Committee members. The decision was made to divide the Committee into Sub-Committees to perform initial research on topics.

The Committee agreed to start preliminary research and study of three focus areas, which included: wellness; assignment policy; and sexual harassment and assault. The Committee will request a briefing from OSD about sexual harassment and assault before moving forward on this topic. It was noted that Don't Ask Don't Tell policies are being studied and DACOWITS wants to maintain awareness of sexual assault and harassment as it may apply.

There was discussion on how to make recommendations to DoD Senior leadership, the Service Chiefs and service liaison officers. Consensus was that building personal relationships with senior leadership was critical to DACOWITS' success in implementing the Committee's recommendations. Suggestion that having the same people speak for DACOWITS would establish continuity and increase trust was positively received.

Col (Ret) Torres will lead the study of wellness and well-being. Assisting will be: CSM (Ret) Santiago; Col (Ret) Cammermeyer; and Dr. (MajGen (Ret)) Trowell-Harris, and HON Ms. DeMesme. These committee members will create questions and work with the Committee's contractor to do preliminary research. Their work will be presented to the body of the Committee at a public meeting for focus area decisions.

BG (Ret) LeBoeuf will lead the study of assignment policy. Assisting will be: BG (Ret) Cleckley; SgtMaj MC (Ret) Estrada; Ms. Campbell; and HON Ms. James.

Once research topics were agreed upon, the Committee members debated what type of meeting (Full Committee or Sub-Committee) should take place next. A proposal was made and accepted to host a Full Committee meeting in October preceded by Sub-Committee meetings to give the Sub-Committees time to research their areas of interest. Some discussion was concerned the most comprehensive titles of the Sub-Committees to ensure they would reflect the true objectives of the committees.

The Committee then received a briefing from Darlene Sullivan, the Oversight Program Manager for the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO). Additional contributions were made by Cynthia Bingham, Joint Chiefs of Staff J-1, Joint Personnel Readiness Planner. Highlights of the briefing were:

- Every service has conducted a sexual assault summit.
- SAPRO oversees all the various sexual assault programs within the different military services.
- Definition of sexual assault includes any kind of inappropriate touching.
- Men are also victims of sexual assault, primarily man on man.
- Offenders are banking on the idea that victims will not report the incident.
- The main priority centers on obtaining proper healthcare for the victims. However, restricted reporting can hamper this effort. In California restricted reporting is not authorized. The policy on reporting is not consistent throughout the country.
- Some victims refuse assistance from on-base resources. Goal is to train people located off-base to deal with these individuals' needs.
- Right now the SAPRO program is only for service members. Goal is to change policy to be able to incorporate civilian and contract workers who need assistance.
- Funding is an issue. SAPRO obtained 7 million dollars for a Sexual Assault database, but they cannot count on this figure annually. They would like to sustain a guaranteed level of funding in order to conduct long term research.

The briefing was followed with a question and answer session. Some highlights were: Sexual harassment, as well as sexual assault impact military readiness. Victims may be reluctant to report assaults for fear they will be accused of playing a part in causing the crime. It was noted that over time service members cease seeing the situation as controllable at the individual level, but rather see it as a command matter. Interest was expressed in examining the training given to military leadership on how best to implement a sexual assault-free environment and sexual harassment-free command climate. The work of David Lisak, known for his research with sex offenders, was offered as a resource. Sexual Assault is a global concern as shown by NATO's committee on gender issues. The White House Council on Women and Girls is also looking at this topic.

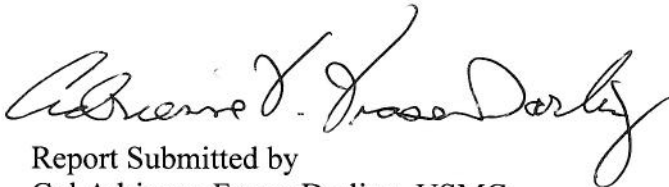
### **Public Open Forum**

LTG Kennedy opened the floor and invited discussion. Questions were asked about marketing and how do we brand women in the military? Some participants stated they did not want to be branded; - they just wanted to be seen as simply being "a soldier."

Concluding comments and issues discussed were:

- Stereotypes are extremely strong and some are not positive. Army women may be seen as too forceful and not able to fit into a corporate climate. Work must be done to break these stereotypes.
- Until the issue of stopping sexual harassment is accepted as the right course by both sexes and not viewed as the government "helping the woman," stereotypes will prevail.
- Recommendation was made that the Committee should meet with groups such as the RFPB (Reserve Forces Policy Board) to increase outreach to female reservists.
- The Air Force Academy is studying sexual orientation and could be interested in communicating with the Committee on this issue.
- This year is the 10th anniversary of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 which deals with an entire host of women's issues related to serving in the military. Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1889 deal specifically with sexual harassment. NATO has a major committee on gender issues, and requires participation in this committee by all NATO member countries.

**This concluded the formal discussion and the Committee meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.**



Report Submitted by  
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Military Director, DACOWITS



Report Certified by  
LTG Claudia J. Kennedy, USA Ret  
DACOWITS Chair

Attachment as Stated

#### **DACOWITS MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE**

##### **Committee Members Present**

LTG(Ret) Claudia Kennedy  
COL(Ret) Margarethe Cammermeyer  
Ms. Nancy Duff Campbell  
BG(Ret) Julia Cleckley  
The Honorable Ruby DeMesme  
SgtMaj MC(Ret) John Estrada  
The Honorable Debbie James  
BG(Ret) Maureen LeBoeuf  
Col(Ret) Phil Torres

##### **Members Absent**

CSM(Ret) Roberta Santiago