

## **DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES**

### **Business Meeting Minutes**

**March 4, 2011**

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) held a full Committee meeting on March 4, 2011. The meeting was open to the public and was held at the Marriott Residence Inn, 550 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

This public meeting was opened by Col Adrienne Fraser Darling and the DACOWITS Chair LTG (Ret) Claudia Kennedy. The attendees introduced themselves and COL Fraser Darling gave a brief explanation of the business of the day, and noted that 2011 is the 60-year anniversary of the establishment of DACOWITS. Col Fraser Darling then introduced Dr. Connie Best, a recognized expert on sexual assault (SA) and the meeting's guest presenter and round table discussion leader.

#### **Sexual Assault Prevention in the Military: Presentation and Round Table Discussion**

Connie Best, Ph.D., Professor and Director of Adult Services, National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina, and former member of DACOWITS, addressed the group with a prepared presentation (enclosure 1), followed by a roundtable discussion involving Committee members, service representatives, and audience members.

- In her presentation, Dr. Best remarked that the military needs to talk about SA primarily because 1) SA has a profound effect on victims; 2) SA is a criminal offense; 3) SA has various adverse effects on the services; 4) SA is a growing problem in the civilian and military world; 5) there are effective prevention efforts to reduce the occurrence of SA. Dr. Best added that SA is detrimental not just to victims, but to overall military readiness, other unit members, families, and public perceptions of the DoD.
- Dr. Best offered several strategies for preventing SA in the military: 1) SA needs to be emphasized as a serious criminal offense; 2) gender-specific prevention information should be provided to service members, though gender-segregated training programs are not needed; 3) service members should be counseled about the role that alcohol use plays in creating environments in which SA can occur; 4) commanders need to understand and prevent environments tolerating sexual harassment as major contributing factors to sexual assault; 5) there needs to be a continued focus on bystander intervention in preventing SA before it occurs. Dr. Best also emphasized that interactive elements in prevention programs will increase program effectiveness. She added that training should also be

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focused on commanders in order to set the tone for members of their command, and emphasized that leaders need to be given proper tools and training in order to disseminate these programs effectively. In addition, she noted that mandating participation of service members, including commanders, in prevention programs – instead of merely using incentives to foster participation – may be an effective method in the military.

- Committee and audience members asked Dr. Best for her views on appropriate methods for measuring program effectiveness. Dr. Best emphasized that it is important to start with good data and understand and share those data. She specified that epidemiological studies should be used, and not merely prevalence reports, as SA incidences are often underreported in prevalence reports. For instance, she noted that good studies operationally define sexual assault (e.g., spell out what actions specifically constitute rape) in order to avoid underreporting. In addition, she stressed the importance of strict adherence to established process development, implementation, and measurement parameters in any study. Dr. Best also recommended that the military look to the civilian world, particularly universities, for effective programs while acknowledging the need to adapt programs to military culture.
- Committee and audience members expressed concern that reporting SA can be especially difficult in the military given the chain of command. Dr. Best addressed these concerns, noting that it is important to stress in outreach programs that SA will not be tolerated regardless of rank. She also noted that giving high visibility to punishment for these crimes is helpful. Dr. Best added that, in general, reporting such crimes to a stranger is always difficult for victims. With specific regard to the military population, Dr. Best added that there is little supervision in the period immediately after basic training and noted that this population is at particular risk of SA. Dr. Best stated that it would be best that SA education and prevention programs start in basic training.
- Service representatives also took the opportunity to participate in the roundtable discussion and addressed various topics brought up by Dr. Best and Committee members. These representatives addressed various ongoing efforts of their respective services to combat SA, noting particularly prevention/education programs along with new and ongoing initiatives to improve the SA reporting process. In addition, several representatives stated that their respective service commands are committed to holding leaders accountable on their efforts to address SA. Several representatives also commented that their services are aware that continual efforts are needed to properly address the problem of SA in the military.

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### **Discussion and approval of 2010 DACOWITS Report**

DACOWITS Vice-Chair Nancy Duff Campbell provided a summary of the Committee's activities and topics of study in 2010, and summarized the Committee's recommendations and reasoning in support of those recommendations. The Committee's recommendations are as follows:

#### **Wellness Subcommittee**

- 1) The Department of Defense (DoD) and the services should ensure the timely development and delivery of properly designed and fitting combat-related equipment for women, such as flak jackets, by the end of 2011.
- 2) DoD and the services should redesign the flight suit for proper fit and function for women and men.
- 3) DoD and the services should examine and identify gender-specific aspects and disparities related to PTSD, and where appropriate, develop and implement targeted and accessible treatment programs, available to both genders.

#### **Assignments Subcommittee**

- 1) DoD should eliminate the 1994 combat exclusion policy and direct the services to eliminate their respective assignment rules, thereby ending gender-based restrictions on military assignments. Concurrently, DoD and the services should open all related career fields/specialties, schooling and training opportunities that have been closed to women as a result of the DoD combat exclusion policy and service assignment policies.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2010 Report and the recommendations contained therein (Tab F).

### **Discussion of 2011 Study Topics**

BG (Ret) Maureen LeBoeuf presented the 2011 Assignments Subcommittee study topics: 1) training provided to women for weapons organic to their units; 2) ways to effectively integrate women into combat units.

Col (Ret) Phil Torres presented the 2011 Wellness Subcommittee study topic: sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention. Col Torres added that the subcommittee will also be mindful of

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the following topics as possible future issues of study: availability of National Guard and Reserve health care, and the impact of joint basing on health care.

### **Discussion of Spring 2011 Installation Visits**

Col Fraser Darling presented a tentative list and schedule of 2011 installation visits, noting that the DACOWITS Office had worked with service liaisons to identify installations that have high concentrations of service members returning from deployment. Service representatives, Committee members, and audience members provided feedback on these proposed visits in order to refine the proposed schedule.

### **Recognition of Departing DACOWITS members**

The Committee and Dr. Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, honored CSM (Ret) Roberta Santiago and Col (Ret) Phil Torres for their significant contributions to DACOWITS during their time with the Committee.

### **Public Open Forum**

**I am a Veteran: Through Current Conflicts:** Therese Hughes, the daughter of a woman veteran, explained that she is compiling photographs of female veterans in order to publish a work intended to positively portray women in the military. She encouraged female veterans in attendance to participate in her project, and noted that she aims to have all photographs taken by Labor Day, 2011.

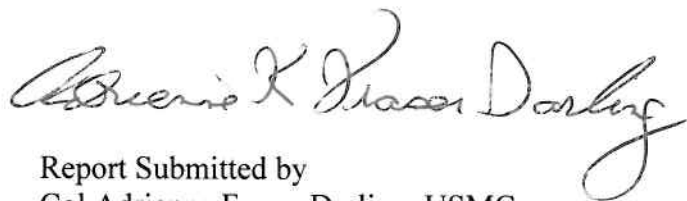
**Joint Women's Leadership Symposium:** Speakers informed the audience that this event, sponsored by the Sea Service Leadership Association, will be held this year on March 15-16 in San Diego, CA.

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned.

Committee members held an administrative meeting to discuss Spring 2011 site visit schedules, the upcoming June 2011 meeting, and plans for the DACOWITS 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

**Meeting was adjourned.**

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Report Submitted by  
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Military Director, DACOWITS



Report Certified by  
LTG (Ret) Claudia J. Kennedy  
DACOWITS Chair

Enclosures as stated

**DACOWITS MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE**

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

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