

DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS)

Quarterly Meeting Minutes

8–9 March 2016

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) held a quarterly business meeting on March 8 and March 9, 2016. The meeting took place at the Sheraton Pentagon City, 900 S. Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204.

8 March 2016

Introduction and Opening Remarks

COL Aimee Kominiak, Designated Federal Officer and DACOWITS Military Director, opened the meeting by reviewing the Committee's establishment and charter. DACOWITS Chair, LtGen (Ret) Frances Wilson, thanked the day's briefers and public audience for their attendance. She asked all Committee members and meeting attendees to introduce themselves. LtGen (Ret) Wilson recognized that March is Women's History Month and an opportune time to reflect on what DoD has done to reaffirm the contributions of women to our nation. On December 3, 2015, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Ash Carter announced that all occupational specialties and positions, without exception, were to be opened to women within 30 days of the announcement (a waiting period required by law). Women have been a part of every war effort in U.S. history, proving themselves time and time again in the toughest of situations. For years, DACOWITS has supported this change in policy; now the focus can shift to integrating women into these newly opened units and positions by implementing gender-neutral occupational standards.

COL Kominiak reviewed the status of the Committee's requests for information (RFIs). The Committee has received responses to most of its RFIs. The responses were delivered in either written or briefing format. The Committee has not received responses for two RFIs; one requested a briefing from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness's (OUSD(P&R)) Office of Force Resiliency, and one requested a briefing from the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, regarding their respective gender integration implementation plans and timelines, which have not yet been approved. The Committee will make another request for these briefings to be presented during the June 2016 business meeting. No congressional notifications have been issued since the previous DACOWITS business meeting, which was held last December.

Introduction and Swearing-In of New Committee Members

LtGen (Ret) Wilson introduced the Honorable Brad R. Carson, Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, (USD(P&R)), who currently performs the duties of the Principal Deputy USD(P&R).

Mr. Carson reiterated DACOWITS' influence and achievements. He stressed the importance of developing new and innovative policies to address the struggles of women serving in the military. Today, women comprise 20 percent of the military. Mr. Carson explained that while much progress has been made, there is more work to be done to promote gender integration and increase the number of women in leadership and combat roles. Mr. Carson went on to say that SECDEF Carter has implemented creative approaches to facilitate gender integration, including expanding maternity leave, making advanced reproductive technologies available to female Service members, adding lactation rooms to work sites, and revising personnel policies to align with women's personal and career ambitions. The force of the future will be faced with increasing demands and therefore will require greater participation by women, who—based on current data—are more likely to pursue higher education. As DACOWITS continues to grow—with the addition of three new members—there is greater potential to gather information and make recommendations. Mr. Carson expressed his gratitude for being asked to participate in the swearing-in ceremony and for the work that DACOWITS has done and will continue to do.

LtGen (Ret) Wilson introduced and welcomed the following new DACOWITS members: Col (Ret) John Boggs, Maj Gen (Ret) Sharon Dunbar, and Gen (Ret) Janet Wolfenbarger. COL Kominiak administered the oath to the new members in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. DACOWITS Vice Chair, CMSgt (Ret) Bernise Belcer, presented new members with DACOWITS pins, and Mr. Carson congratulated them.

Re-examining the Chaplain Corps

The Committee continues to be interested in the progress made by the Services' respective Chaplain Corps to increase their percentages of women serving since DACOWITS previously examined the issue and made various recommendations to the Services for consideration. The Committee requested a briefing from the Armed Forces Chaplains Board and the Air Force, Army, and Navy Chaplain Corps on the development of recruitment goals and the accessions process for the Chaplain Corps. The Committee requested the numbers and percentages of women who served within the Chaplain Corps annually between 2006 and 2015, and the Services' accession goals for the Chaplain Corps (to include the female percentage breakdown) for the next five years (2016–2021). The Committee also asked how female chaplains are tracked for assignment purposes, where they are assigned, and the distribution across denominations.

Army: CH (COL) Yvonne Hudson, Director, Sustainment and Information, Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains

CH (COL) Hudson reported that female chaplains can serve at every rank and in every component of the Army, and that there are no restrictions on where they are assigned. From 2010 to 2015, there was an increase in the percentage of female chaplains due to recruiting efforts, women's conferences, and the coordination and collaboration between the Chief of Chaplains and recruiters. Data from before 2010 could not be obtained and presented for comparison purposes since the Office of the Chief of Chaplains implemented a new personnel data management process in 2010. Across theological institutions, women represent up to one-half of the student body. CH (COL) Hudson explained that many religious organizations continue to not ordain or endorse women; therefore, the population from which to recruit female chaplains is small and serves as a constraint to progress. For FY 2016 and FY 2017, the accession goals for women in the Chaplain Corps are 13–14 percent. There are no targets for gender, ethnicity, or

faith group when recruiting or accessing chaplains. Diversity in the Army Chaplain Corps has increased over the years.

Chaplains must meet certain education and experience requirements. Chaplains must possess both a baccalaureate and graduate degree in theological or religious studies (with at least 72 semester hours in graduate work in those fields of study) and a minimum of two years of full-time professional experience, validated by their respective endorsing agencies. As such, both men and women are entering the seminary at later ages—the average age for females entering the seminary is 40. Of those in seminary who are age 50 or older, women outnumber men; the average age of eligible chaplains may be a limitation to recruitment given the time needed for additional training once they join the military.

Although the pool from which to recruit female chaplains is limited because of the average age of individuals who seek to provide religious leadership and by the low number of religious organizations that will endorse women, the Army has experienced an increase in female chaplains in the Active Component, National Guard, and Reserve.

Navy: CH (CDR) Judy Malana, Deputy Director, Chaplain Corps Force Structure

In 1973, the Navy was the first Service to commission a female chaplain. The number of female chaplains has slowly increased; by the 1990s, the proportion of female chaplains was 6–7 percent. Since then, the percentage of female chaplains has remained steady at 7 percent. The Navy recruits from the same pool of chaplain candidates as the other Services. Similar to the Army, there are no accession goals based on gender, faith group, or any other category. Additionally, there are no bonuses or incentives for prospective chaplains. The Navy only looks for the best and most qualified candidates.

The process for vetting a chaplain is extensive and takes approximately nine years. Apart from ecclesiastical endorsement and ordination, the Navy requires a bachelor's degree from a qualified four-year undergraduate educational institution, a graduate degree in theological or related studies from an accredited educational institution, and two years of full-time religious leadership experience that is compatible with the duties of a religious ministry professional and relevant to the settings of military chaplaincy. There are also certain age and physical requirements. CH (CDR) Malana described the prospective pool of chaplain candidates from seminaries. She elaborated that the primary challenge of recruitment is the limited population from which to draw candidates. In 2014, women of a recruitable age (30–40 years old) comprised only 20 percent of the female population that entered seminary; of this sample, not all want to consider a career in the military. To address this challenge, there is a female recruiter on staff at Navy Recruiting Command to speak with potential candidates.

There are no gender-coded billets; female chaplains are serving globally. Chaplains can be screened for billets with greater responsibility. This establishes a level playing field that allows those most qualified, based on record and professionalism, to be recognized and assigned appropriately.

Air Force: Mr. John Creamer, Deputy, Personnel, Budget and Readiness Division, Office of the Air Force Chief of Chaplains

Mr. Creamer reported that there has been a slight increase in the percentage of female chaplains in the Air Force from 2006 to 2016, but that it may be more accurate to conclude that the percentage has remained steady since the total number of chaplains in the Air Force has

decreased since 2006. The Air Force Reserve Chaplain Corps is 7.5 percent female, and the Air National Guard Chaplaincy is 11 percent female. Although the accession goal over the next five years (2016–2021) is to access qualified chaplains, regardless of gender, Mr. Creamer cited the same challenges and barriers as the Army and Navy has to recruiting qualified female chaplains: age and gender. The average accession age of a female chaplain is 35 years, which is almost 10 years older than the average age of a new officer, making it the most maturely populated, professional career field in the Air Force. Despite the mature average age and stringent qualifying requirements for chaplains, the Chaplain Corps does not offer any financial bonuses or other incentives to join. Moreover, there are only 21 faith groups that endorse female chaplains; many more groups do not, which limits the pool from which to recruit candidates. Furthermore, women make up only 16 percent of the chaplains representing the 21 female-endorsing faith groups. Ultimately, the goal would be to match the proportion of female chaplains with the proportion of female airmen, which across all Air Force components is 80 percent male and 20 percent female.

Assignments of female chaplains are based on two factors: the commander's requirement (a validated need for a female chaplain requested through the Air Force Personnel Center) and career enhancement. Female chaplains may be requested to enhance diversity at a given installation. Otherwise, female chaplains are assigned based on need, availability, and to ensure they have full career development opportunities.

Chaplain Assistants are trained to facilitate spiritual care and ethical leadership to airmen, their families, and, as authorized, other Air Force personnel. The percentage of female chaplain assistants is much higher (32 percent in active duty, 41 percent in the Air Force Reserves, and 36 percent in the Air National Guard) than that of female chaplains.

Armed Forces Review Board: CH (CAPT) Jerome Hinson (Navy), Executive Director

CH (CAPT) Hinson provided the history of the Armed Forces Review Board as it relates to the chaplaincy. The board was formed soon after the Defense Reorganization Act of 1947, which restructured DoD. In summer 1949, the SECDEF sought ways for the Services to collaborate better on issues related to chaplaincy. The board provides recommendations regarding religious, moral, and ethical issues. Historically, the board has worked with the Office of the USD(P&R) and its office of Military Personnel Policy. In 1952, the board was assigned an executive director, and its travel budget was increased; in 1953, its first charter was established. Following World War II, 70–80 religious organizations had participating chaplains in the Chaplain Corps. As such, the board attempted to devise minimum standards for chaplain education and performance requirements. Standards on chaplaincy and minimum requirements for endorsing agents were established in the mid-1960s. In the 1980s, the Goldwater–Nichols Act established joint chaplaincy positions. The board continued to work collaboratively to coordinate religious support in the military operating environment, where chaplains were in high demand. In the 1990s, during Operation DESERT STORM and with unified commands, more joint activities and active working groups to provide guidance to the board were created. This marked the first time Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu organizations were able to endorse chaplain candidates. At the time of the briefing, there were 194 religious organizations and nine administrative agents that served as endorsing agents. The board continues to explore many topics, including standards and how to address religious accommodation; the professional background of chaplain candidates before coming on active duty; eligibility requirements; and the new and evolving ways that religion influences the public and military domain. The board provides

recommendations to the SECDEF on religious accommodation and military guidance through Department of Defense Instructions.

Discussion

Ms. Donna McAleer inquired how service members' religious and/or spiritual preferences and practices are tracked. CH (CAPT) Hinson (Armed Forces Review Board) explained that the Board works with the Defense Manpower Data Center, where personnel records are maintained, to track Service members' self-reported faith identification. DoD has 104 faith codes from which Service members can select; the Army and Air Force have not yet aligned all their respective codes. Many Service members have reported that their religious preferences are unknown or that they are nonreligious. It is unclear whether all Service members who identify as nonreligious or claim to have unknown religious preferences actually hold these views or are selecting those codes for other reasons. Therefore, when tracking faith preferences across DoD, the board can only provide estimates based on these reports. LTC (Ret) Hae-Sue Park noted that younger Service members may consider themselves to be more spiritual than religious and asked whether this concept is represented by a faith code. CH (CAPT) Hinson (Armed Forces Review Board) reiterated that faith is self-reported and based on Service member identification with a religion; there is no code for Service members to indicate they are spiritual but not religious.

Ms. McAleer also asked about how the representation of religions in the Chaplain Corps matches the breakdown of the population it serves. CH (CDR) Malana (Navy) explained that the demographics of the Chaplain Corps do not reflect that of the general military population. For example, although 2 percent of sailors may self-report as Jewish, this percentage does not reflect in the Navy Chaplain Corps. Furthermore, the Jewish Navy population is not concentrated in one area; rather, it is spread globally. Therefore, the Navy Chaplain Corps considers other ways to meet the religious needs of all its sailors on land and at sea. The Navy is developing metrics to enable chaplains to assess and determine how to meet the religious needs of a unit. These metrics are projected to be released in summer 2016. The Army and Navy reported religious needs assessments are conducted to inform an installation or unit's religious plan, and outside resources are brought in when needed.

Mr. Creamer (Air Force) noted that chaplains should be able to provide worship services on behalf of their endorsing agencies while remaining pluralistic—open to serving all airmen regardless of faith. The ministry plan is developed annually to ensure religious accommodation for all airmen. The Army has similar expectations for its chaplains; they are responsible for providing not only faith-specific exercises and duties, but also other services—such as pastoral care and counseling, relationship training, ethics, or moral leadership—that appeal to a more diverse audience.

Ms. McAleer further queried whether the Services are accounting for the educational background of their respective Chaplain Corps to track the level of diversity. The Air Force responded that the place of education is not a variable that is specifically tracked within the Chaplain Corps. The Navy recognized that, although education is not tracked in terms of diversity of universities and types of schools, the question touches on an important aspect—diversity of thought. Most chaplain candidates that come to the Corps with a particular faith background come from seminary or hold a graduate degree that is aligned with their personal religious affiliation. The Navy does use subspecialty codes to track chaplains' skills outside of chaplain-specific qualifications. The Army added that all chaplains are required to have a graduate degree, and, as

part of the officer record, chaplains' undergraduate and graduate institutions are identified. Specific schools are not being targeted for recruiting purposes; however, the Army is tracking additional skill identifiers.

Dr. Jackie Young asked for clarification from the Air Force on the number of faith groups that endorse women. From the briefing, it appears that there are more than 100 religious affiliations recognized by the Air Force, and more than 80 of these groups do not endorse women as chaplains. Mr. Creamer (Air Force) explained that while there might be more faith groups that do endorse women, as of the time of the briefing they were not represented by a female chaplain. CH (CAPT) Hinson (Armed Forces Review Board) supported Mr. Creamer's assertions and provided an example; the Episcopal organization ordains women, but there are no female Episcopal chaplains, so the organization would not be considered a female-endorsing faith group according to the data on hand.

LTC (Ret) Park asked about the depth of training to provide multid denominational accommodations and cater to the diversity of religion in the military. CH (CDR) Malana (Navy) explained that the ability to address the pluralistic needs of the Navy is considered during recruitment. Chaplains are required to have not only a graduate degree but also professional experience in the ministry. As part of the accessions interview, chaplain candidates are probed on their experiences outside of the traditions of their personal faith. The Navy seeks chaplain candidates that go beyond the scope of their faith and provide institutional ministry and community outreach. The Navy also provides professional development opportunities to chaplains and instruction on Naval chaplaincy related to pluralism. Not all chaplain candidates are considered suitable to serve in a pluralistic environment; with one of the recruiting factors being ability to serve in a pluralistic environment, the Navy has accepted only 40 percent of chaplain applicants. Mr. Creamer (Air Force) confirmed that those who are accepted to the Chaplain Corps are equipped to address religious diversity.

LTC (Ret) Park asked if there is a process for reviewing the performance of chaplains to determine whether they are performing successfully in a pluralistic environment. In the Air Force, commanders annually assess chaplains' abilities and performance. The Army relies on senior chaplains to teach and mentor junior chaplains that are either in seminary, training with the Army National Guard, or in the Reserves. Those who cannot maintain a pluralistic approach are able to self-select out of the program. The intention is to foster maturity, mentorship, and collaboration amongst chaplains. In the Navy, similar to the Air Force, chaplains must complete a three-year probationary period, after which a career status board determines if the chaplain should remain in the Chaplain Corps.

VADM (Ret) Carol Pottenger pointed out that the accession rate for officers has increased a few percentage points but that the accession rate for clergy remains static. Of more interest, however, are the promotion statistics, which remain static for clergy despite the growing number of opportunities for women to compete. VADM (Ret) Pottenger inquired whether the promotion policies and instructions for selection boards emphasize diversity.

Overall, the Air Force has a 44.9-percent promotion rate for men and a more than 46-percent promotion rate for women. The Navy reasoned that not all sailors on nontraditional career paths, such as chaplains, are forward deployed. It is projected that in FY 2017, greater consideration will be given to those with nontraditional career paths. Overall, statistically, women have fared almost as well as men on milestone screening boards; the goal is to maintain momentum by

evening the playing field for all sailors, regardless of gender. VADM (Ret) Pottenger inquired why chaplains were not often advancing to the higher ranks and what the barriers were. CH (COL) Hudson (Army) responded that reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel appears to be a benchmark for success for Army chaplains. CH (CDR) Malana (Navy) reported that not every chaplain has had the opportunity for deployment or ground combat since those billets are not always available; therefore, how promotions can be achieved through a nontraditional career path needs further consideration. The milestone screening process motivates both men and women to stay in the Service. Many women are designated for milestone advancement and are deemed competitive in this process. CH(COL) Hudson (Army) remarked that the question requires further study. In general, there is a small pool of O6-level officers (Colonels) in the Army, so the opportunity for promotion is an issue not only with chaplains, but rather is a factor in why soldiers are leaving the military.

MG (Ret) Gale Pollock reasoned that age seems to be a common issue raised by all the Services in relation to the recruitment of chaplains. Although, by law, an individual cannot continue to serve after age 62, this restriction could be waived to allow chaplains to continue to serve. Eliminating this restriction could increase the pool of recruitable candidates. This waiver proved successful with the nursing corps.

MG (Ret) Pollock also raised the issue of separation between church and state. All briefers recognized that chaplains serve their higher power first, then their country; however, the United States is based on a separation of church and state and respect and equality for all. MG (Ret) Pollock asked how accommodations are made for military chaplains whose respective faiths preclude them from considering and treating women equally. CH (CAPT) Hinson (Armed Forces Review Board) responded that the board maintains ongoing communication with endorsing agencies at the policy level about how to engage and credential chaplains. Every endorsing agency or faith group is to ensure that the ministry professional is able to serve a pluralistic society. CH (COL) Hudson (Army) explained that the concept of free exercise of religion is not treated in the military as it is in the private sector. For example, although the Catholic organization does not endorse female chaplains, Catholic priests must be recruited to fill the needs of soldiers and their families of that faith; approximately 25 percent of the Army is Catholic. However, priests who are recruited must be able to meet the needs of soldiers who are not Catholic. Members of faith groups that do not endorse female chaplains may still support equality for women.

Ms. Monica Medina acknowledged the difficulty of recruiting and retaining chaplains and questioned whether the Services had considered recruiting chaplains outside of the military. She reasoned that if there are military-specific reasons for why chaplains are not continuing on (i.e., lack of promotion, constant moving/traveling), then it may be advantageous to expand the scope of potential chaplains to civilians. The Air Force has considered this, but there is a prominent barrier—military chaplains, through their endorsement, are required to operate in a pluralistic way. Asking civilians to practice pluralism and minister outside of their faith groups is a violation of their First Amendment rights. The few civilian chaplains in the military are able to minister only to others in their respective faith groups. While this is the understood legal interpretation, Mr. Morrison added that this issue may beg for further questioning with OUSD(P&R) lawyers.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Lindenmeyer inquired how an individual's level of pluralism is measured. CH (COL) Hudson (Army) explained that while a chaplain is required to be pluralistic, he or she is

not asked to do anything that violates his or her faith or conscience. Mr. Creamer (Air Force) added that any civilian or contracted clergy are expected to provide support, worship, and education for those in their respective faith groups, but are not to advise command leadership in any way. Rev. Dr. Lindenmeyer asked if Clinical Pastoral Education is a basic requirement for all chaplains. CH (CAPT) Hinson (Armed Forces Review Board) could not respond with any certainty. The educational requirements for chaplains have remained the same since the 1960s.

Maj. Gen. (Ret) Dunbar asked for the Navy to explain its 40-percent acceptance rate for chaplains. In FY 2015, chaplains candidates who were accepted into the Corps were interviewed by a panel and then offered a position in the Corps. The panel consists of six members—at least five of whom are Captains—who represent various faith traditions. Maj Gen (Ret) Dunbar emphasized the importance of a diverse selection panel.

Ms. Sharlene Hawkes inquired whether Services are collecting end-user data regarding Service member preferences around the gender of chaplains. The Services are not collecting such data. CH (COL) Hudson (Army) reasoned that when a person is in emotional or physical pain, gender is not as much of an issue as the need for help.

Sexual Harassment Update

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) from FY 2014 and FY 2015 required a report from DoD on the role of the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) in sexual harassment cases; the report was due to be submitted to Congress on June 1, 2015. The law specified the following four tasks: (1) determine if ODMEO should evaluate/address sexual harassment cases; (2) evaluate the working relationship between ODMEO and DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO); (3) identify ODMEO resource and personnel gaps, if any; and (4) identify ODMEO capacity to track sexual harassment cases currently. For the December 2015 business meeting, the Committee requested that ODMEO provide a briefing on its report to Congress regarding sexual harassment; that report was undergoing clearance staffing at the time of the meeting, and the briefing was postponed until the March 2016 business meeting.

Mr. Clarence Johnson, Director, ODMEO

Mr. Johnson emphasized that sexual harassment has no place in the military and that tolerance of such behavior is counterproductive to military readiness. P. L. 10 USC § 1561 defines sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination in which unwanted advances or requests for sexual favors either (1) become a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career, or basis for career or employment decisions, or (2) interfere with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. ODMEO addresses all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. DoD Directive (DoDD) 1020.02E, Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the DoD, and DoDD 1350.2, Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Program, provide MEO policy guidance on such matters.

At the time of the briefing, DoDD 1350.2 was being rewritten to support the umbrella construct of diversity. Mr. Johnson noted that, in addition to these DoDDs, there are Service-specific policies and procedures on collecting data on sexual harassment complaints.

The September 2014 USD(P&R) Memorandum included two sections of legislation—NDAA FY 2013, Section 579(a), and NDAA FY 2013, Section 579(b)—that directed the Services and the

National Guard Bureau to develop sexual harassment policies that included training, reporting procedures, and response mechanisms; it also directed DoD to develop a data collection plan and report on substantiated incidents of sexual harassment. Mr. Johnson stated that substantiated incidents of sexual harassment that were included in FY 2013 data were reported to Congress in 2014. ODMEO is on track to submit the next “Annual Report on Substantiated Incidents of Sexual Harassment,” along with SAPRO’s annual sexual assault report to Congress, by April 15, 2016. For the first time, the sexual harassment report will be included as a subsection of the sexual assault report. Mr. Johnson reassured the Committee that there is evidence of improvement when comparing data from FY 2013 and FY 2014.

NDAA FY 2014, Section 1735, asked for DoD to review ODMEO’s role and how it addresses sexual harassment cases. This report is still being drafted and is due to be submitted to Congress in June 2016.

Mr. Johnson reported that OUSD(P&R) has made organizational changes and established an office of Executive Director for Force Resiliency (EDFR). EDFR is a new directorate which aligns those offices related to the resiliency and readiness of the Total Force. Mr. Johnson explained that ODMEO now falls under this new EDFR leadership. The directorate also includes SAPRO, and better synchronizes policies to address behaviors on the continuum of harm (e.g. sexual harassment and sexual assault). The new structure has brought more oversight and staff expertise to deal with problems of sexual harassment. An Integrated Process Team was also recently established to examine the roles of ODMEO and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) in reviewing and addressing sexual harassment.

Prevention of and response to sexual harassment remains at the forefront of the policy oversight agenda for EDFR and ODMEO. ODMEO continues to work collaboratively with the Services and the National Guard Bureau to strengthen prevention initiatives and update guidance for sexual harassment prevention and response. In 2015, ODMEO conducted an Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity Curriculum Review to ensure that Equal Opportunity Advisors were being trained appropriately. The Services are using these advisors to assess how well the revised curriculum on sexual assault prevention and response is preparing Service members to deal with sexual harassment in the field.

Discussion

CAPT Beverly Kelley acknowledged that there has been progress of late but that it is not clear why such little improvement was made earlier. The past two annual reports from DACOWITS have included recommendations to provide ODMEO with the necessary financial and personnel resources to successfully prevent, respond, and track sexual harassment cases. The hope is that ODMEO’s working relationship with SAPRO will leverage valuable resources to best address the full continuum of harm—from sexual harassment to sexual assault. Mr. Johnson explained that close working relationships have been established across organizations. The Integrated Process Team was also established, in part, to address the continuum of harm.

Dr. Young noted that nearly 220,000 positions opened for women as a result of SECDEF Carter’s announcement and asked if ODMEO is planning to implement any initiatives to address these openings or conduct any special training for the women filling those positions and/or the units involved. Mr. Johnson responded that there were no plans for special training.

Public Comment Period

The Committee did not receive any statements or requests for comment from the public in advance of the deadline published in the Federal Register Notice.

9 March 2016

Morning Remarks

The Designated Federal Officer and DACOWITS Military Director, COL Kominiak, opened the meeting to the public and introduced the agenda topics for the day. DACOWITS Chair, LtGen (Ret) Wilson, thanked the day's briefers and public audience for their attendance. She asked all Committee members and meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

Announcement of 2016 Installation Visit Schedule

COL Kominiak announced the list of installations DACOWITS will visit in April and May 2016:

- Fort Lewis (Army, Washington)
- McChord Air Force Base (Air Force, Washington)
- Naval Station Kitsap (Navy, Washington)
- District 13 (Coast Guard, Washington)
- Sector Puget Sound (Coast Guard, Washington)
- Submarine Base New London (Coast Guard, Connecticut)
- United States Coast Guard Academy (Coast Guard, Connecticut)
- Navy Expeditionary Combat Command Little Creek (Navy, Virginia)
- Fort Lee (Army, Virginia)
- Marine Corps Air Station New River (Marine Corps, North Carolina)
- Camp Lejeune (Marine Corps, North Carolina)
- Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point (Marine Corps, North Carolina)
- Pope Air Force Base (Air Force, North Carolina)
- Fort Bragg (Army, North Carolina)

Gender Integration Best Practices

The Committee requested a briefing from the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps on how each is progressing with full and effective integration of women in previously closed combat positions. Specifically, the Committee requested an update on which positions opened between FY 2013 and FY 2015, the number of women assigned, and the required training completed.

Marine Corps: Col Raul Lianez, Branch Head, Integration Branch, Manpower Management Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Col Lianez reported that the Marine Corps developed a deliberate plan to maximize the talent, skills, and potential of all Marines. As of 2014, 11 previously closed occupational specialties opened, including positions in tanks, artillery, and low-altitude air defense. At the time of this briefing, there were eight female Marines in those positions; they have completed Entry Level Training and military occupational specialty (MOS) school and are serving in those units.

The Marine Corps' plans for effective gender integration were informed by two years of research and have been approved by the SECDEF. Best practices for integration were identified through this research, and the Marine Corps continues to effectively implement and facilitate progress. The Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force study, as well as other studies, indicated that using a teaming approach is advantageous for both the individuals involved and the unit. For gender integration, teaming would consist of assigning two female Marines who completed MOS school together to the same previously closed unit. If a teaming approach cannot be implemented, then a similar concept—cohesive cohorts—should be employed. Instead of pairing two female Marines together, cohesive cohorts requires a male and a female Marine who completed MOS school together to be assigned to the same previously closed unit. Leadership assignment, or assigning female leaders (i.e., noncommissioned officers, staff noncommissioned officers, and officers) to previously closed units at least 90 days prior to the arrival/assignment of junior enlisted Marines who have recently completed MOS school has also proven successful. For the 11 newly opened occupational specialties, it was successful to have two or more female leaders assigned to prepare the unit prior to introducing teaming or cohesive cohorts. Finally, the Marine Corps is implementing an education plan designed to support servicewide leadership efforts to facilitate the cultural change necessary to ensure successful integration into previously closed occupational specialties and units; this education plan takes a tiered, or “train the trainer,” approach and is meant to serve as a road map for training.

Army: Mr. Alphonsa Green, Recruiting Policy Branch Chief, Army G-1

The priorities of gender integration for the Army, are (1) readiness and (2) offering viable soldier career paths. Mr. Green compared the proportion of women in occupational specialties with the highest and lowest percentages of women. Certain occupational specialties that are now open are particularly challenging and have great physical demands, which is potentially why fewer women enter them. Since 2012, seven occupational specialties have opened for women; Mr. Green reported the percentage of women in each of those opened specialties. Mr. Green then presented a graphic on the landscape of the newly opened occupational specialties from FY 2013 to FY 2016, including the percentages of female soldiers on ships, accession targets, and the actual number of female soldiers contracted. The Army is on track to open all occupations to women. At the time of the briefing, 132 of the 137 enlisted accession specialties were open to women; the final five special combat arms occupational specialties will be opened pending approval of the Army's implementation plan by the SECDEF. Note that in some cases, the opening of previously closed occupational specialties led to a redistribution of women, rather than an increase in the number of women, in those positions.

Similar to the Marine Corps, the Army takes a “leaders first” approach and assigns officers and/or noncommissioned officers to combat units before assigning junior female enlisted soldiers. If that is not feasible, junior female enlisted soldiers are assigned to units that have been

assigned women from other branches. As of February 2016, every combat battalion has female leaders assigned; there are 1,814 female officers assigned to Combat Brigades, and women make up 12 percent of officers in combat battalions.

The Army is developing a gender neutral Occupational Physical Requirements Test for all specialties. Once approved, the assessment will determine if a soldier meets the physical standards and demands for a given specialty.

Navy: CAPT Laurie Porter, Assistant Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel Readiness, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command

CAPT Porter provided an update on the Navy's progress of integrating women into previously closed Coastal Riverine Force (CRF) positions. The CRF was established in 2012 with the merging of the Navy Riverine Force and the Maritime Expeditionary Security Force. The primary mission of the CRF is to conduct maritime security operations across all phases of military operations. Although the CRF was open to women from its inception, the riverine boat crews were not open to women until March 2014. At that time, the Navy opened 252 enlisted and 15 officer positions to women. As of February 2016, the CRF has 618 female enlisted and 29 female officers assigned. All 291 CRF positions are now open to women. Eight women have completed at least one of the Riverine Training Courses and are assigned to positions that were previously closed.

The CRF contains three Active Component squadrons and four Reserve Component squadrons. The three Active Component Squadrons, where the previously closed positions existed, have 109 female enlisted sailors (of 1,403 enlisted; 8 percent) and 12 female officers (of 93 officers; 13 percent); in total, 121 women are assigned to these squadrons. Reserve Component Squadrons billets were never restricted by gender. CAPT Porter clarified that the assignment of personnel to positions within the squadrons is based on the needs of the squadron (vacant positions) and previous experience, without regard to gender. CAPT Porter encouraged patience in tracking the number of women in newly opened positions since it takes time to adequately train women for success.

Air Force: Lt Col Veronica Senia, Chief, Air Force Enlisted Accessions and Training

The Air Force did not open previously closed combat positions between FY 2013 and FY 2015 since 99 percent of its career fields were already fully integrated. Nonetheless, those career fields that were recently opened already included women who were serving in support roles.

The Air Force conducted focus groups with airmen in physically demanding career fields, and the data informed the Air Force's implementation plan for successful gender integration. These data indicated that there is not a need for sweeping policy changes; rather, small changes can be made to accommodate gender integration (e.g., a flip sign for the locker room to indicate who is in the room, a sheet to divide men's and women's areas in open bay barracks). It is understood that integration will take time and will require a focus on standards, communication, policy, education and engaged leadership. All airmen will be educated to ensure that integration of women is based on ability to meet standards as opposed to quotas, critical mass, favoritism, or gender preferences. It is also vital for leadership to set the tone for a healthy organizational climate and promote zero tolerance for sexual assault, sexual harassment, hazing, or other unprofessional behavior. The implementation plan also outlines the role of mentors (i.e., female

support cadre, senior with junior cohorts) as a means of support for women. Focus group participants, however, did warn against spotlighting or isolating women.

In the focus groups, women shared that more successful integration took place when they personally set boundaries and were able to gain acceptance into a group of male peers based on ability.

Discussion

Ms. McAleer inquired how Services are selecting and assessing commanders and leaders for the newly integrated units to facilitate successful integration. The Army plans to implement the Occupational Physical Requirements Test, once approved, as a means to assess a soldier's ability to meet physical standards for a given specialty. Ms. McAleer clarified that she was more interested in knowing how the leadership skills of those in command of newly integrated units will be assessed. The Army emphasized the training soldiers of all ranks will receive as part of the implementation plan. Ms. McAleer asked if the education outlined in the implementation plan will take the form of a class in which a soldier can pass or fail. The Army's implementation plan is pending SECDEF approval, and details of the plan cannot be shared at this time. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) highlighted the tiered approach the Marine Corps will implement to support servicewide leadership efforts. Success of training will be measured at the unit level. CAPT Porter (Navy) reminded the Committee that the CRF has been integrating women since inception. Commanding officers are required to attend Command Leadership School; a course is being developed that will incorporate equal opportunity training and gender integration issues and that could be offered as soon as late summer 2016. Ms. McAleer followed up by asking if any commander from any Service has been deemed inappropriate for a leadership position in the newly integrated units. The Navy has not experienced this issue. The Marine Corps requires commanders to receive SAPRO, equal opportunity, and diversity training to facilitate successful gender integration.

MG (Ret) Pollock expressed the concern that despite the occupational physical standards the Services are moving to develop, overall, the population of Service members is not physically fit. Her concern is that Service members are locked into an occupational specialty based on initial tests of their skills and physical fitness and are not reassessed later. The Army allows for career progression into the specialty a soldier chooses and for which he or she is physically qualified. If a soldier's baseline test score does not qualify him or her for the chosen specialty, the soldier can reattempt to pass the test. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) responded that the Marine Corps would see this as a lateral career move and that there is an existing process for lateral moves; however, the process may need to be refined based on recent policy changes. The goal is to ensure the move is right for the unit and the individual. CAPT Porter (Navy) explained that for many lateral moves, the skill set is narrow within and across these occupational specialties. LtCol Senia (Air Force) countered that the Air Force has retraining opportunities for critical career fields, but airmen would need to volunteer and meet the standards.

MG (Ret) John Macdonald applauded the briefers for listening to each other and suggested the Services review the Army's briefing materials regarding integrating female leaders into every combat battalion. MG (Ret) Macdonald appreciated the Army's approach to integration. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) reported lessons have been learned on best practices and approaches for how to integrate women into a predominantly male team or unit. Mentorship and teaming is key. MG (Ret) Macdonald expressed interest in the Services' data on the percentage of female

officers in combat brigades. Ms. Medina supported MG (Ret) Macdonald's request and further requested that the data be presented by occupational specialty and by unit. She suggested this request be a standing RFI so the Committee can track progress. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) explained that most Services are likely tracking this data already. The next step is for data to be automated. LtGen (Ret) Wilson reported that the Committee will be briefed at the June 2016 business meeting on DoD's plan to monitor gender integration progress.

LTC (Ret) Park acknowledged that mentorship and leadership is key to success, but she inquired as to what opportunities those in mid-level officer positions will have if they want to transfer into infantry or combat occupational specialties. The Marine Corps explained that this is an issue of lateral entry that the Marine Corps is considering, including how senior a position a Marine can achieve before lateral entry into another field is no longer likely anticipated to be successful for the institution, unit, and individual. Mr. Green (Army) agreed that career progression is a major concern in the Army. It is unclear whether a soldier is as competitive if he or she laterally moves to a new position and is serving with new peers. The Army is concerned whether women are set up for success when moved into newly opened occupational specialties and positions. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) clarified that for the Marine Corps, more consideration is needed on the impact lateral transfers have on the success of individuals and the units they enter. CAPT Porter explained the difference in the Navy; a more narrow skill set allows sailors to move more frequently from job to job.

Ms. Medina pointed out that the Committee should have asked Special Operations to provide a briefing on its decision process for gender integration practices. She then asked the Marine Corps for its thoughts on separate basic training for men and women since it was a hallmark of the Marine Corps program. LtGen (Ret) Wilson reminded the Committee that it will receive a briefing on this issue during the June 2016 business meeting. Col Lianez said the Marine Corps' current model results in a satisfactory product in terms of combat effectiveness; the Service is looking into this further.

CAPT Kelley asked for an update on the integration of the Navy Sea, Air and Land Teams (SEALs). CAPT Porter responded that she is part of the CRF and unable to answer questions concerning the SEALs. LtGen (Ret) Wilson reported that, to her knowledge, the Navy will begin offering a preparatory course on SEALs training at the Naval Academy, and women can apply to take the course.

Rev. Dr. Lindenmeyer asked about the research the Marine Corps conducted to identify best practices for gender integration. For the past two years, the Marine Corps has worked to improve integration. Other research included the Ground Combat Integrated Task Force study. A gender-integrated unit was formed and tasked with doing operational events. Outcomes of the research continue to inform the Marine Corps' best practices on gender integration. LtGen (Ret) Wilson informed the Committee that on DACOWITS' webpage, there is a link to studies that have been conducted to inform the decision to open all units and positions to women. Much of the research was commissioned by the Marine Corps.

Ms. Hawkes applauded the Marine Corps for its work; however, at an all-male focus group in 2015, she heard a comment that standards have been lowered for women. Ms. Hawkes asked the Marine Corps how those perceptions are being addressed. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) reassured the Committee that the standards have not been lowered—instead, they have become gender neutral. As a result, there are male Marines that will need to become faster and fitter. Ultimately,

the new standards will lead to a healthier and faster Marine Corps. The physical standards will be published and executed. During execution and practice, male and female Marines will be doing the same testing exercises. LtGen (Ret) Wilson asked whether women in the infantry course trained alongside or separately from men. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) responded that men and women were housed separately but trained together.

VADM (Ret) Pottenger reiterated the Army's integration priorities on readiness: All positions need to be opened so the best talent, regardless of gender, can be assigned appropriately. VADM (Ret) Pottenger asked if the Army is focusing on the occupational specialties that can handle an influx of women. Mr. Green (Army) responded that he was unaware of any targeted incentives to influence women entering those specialties. When there is a gender-neutral standard, recruitment is focused not on gender, but rather on the ability to perform in those specialties. VADM (Ret) Pottenger clarified that she was not suggesting targeting incentives for women, but rather was asking if there were priorities for recruitment and retention with a population that has not been able to enter certain occupational specialties. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) explained that the ultimate goal is to ensure combat effectiveness and to manage talent and skills effectively and appropriately. The focus is on ensuring the Marine is picking the right occupational specialty to maximize his or her combat effectiveness.

MG (Ret) Pollock noted that the Army's briefing materials show the highest percentages of women are in medical fields. These positions have been open to women for years, and it would be expected that the percentage would reflect population statistics.

Ms. McAleer asked the Marine Corps what evidence supports its best practices for integration, specifically the teaming approach. She asked why one woman cannot be assigned to a unit if the right leadership is there, and why that is not as notably successful as when two women are teamed together. She had concerns about a team of two women potentially not working well together on a personal level. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) explained that the concept behind teaming is that the two female Marines have a shared experience from going through school together, and that this teaming approach has been shown to be effective. Research shows that the teamed members feel more compelled to vouch for each other and are willing to speak on each other's behalf. Col Lianez (Marine Corps) offered to provide the research results.

Ms. Medina asked the Army about recruiting efforts directed at women, given the newly opened occupational specialties. Overall, the Army is trying to recruit more women, but recruiting efforts have not changed since these specialties were opened. Ms. Medina also asked the Army if a date had been set for when the final five occupational specialties will be opened. Pending the implementation plan's approval from SECDEF, the occupational specialties are projected to be opened as early as April 1, 2016.

Transition Programs and Resources

DACOWITS is interested in learning more about the transition training that is provided to service members prior to them being released from active duty. Specifically, the Committee wants to identify whether the military can mitigate the risks of post-service unemployment, homelessness, and suicide among female veterans before they leave the military. The committee requested a briefing from the Services on the following: what transition programs and/or resources do the Services provide to their members? Are there any unique programs and/or resources provided specifically to servicewomen (e.g., Female Marine-Only Transition

Workshop)? How do the Services measure the effectiveness of these transition programs and/or resources? How, if at all, are the Services identifying servicewomen at high risk for unemployment, homelessness, and/or suicide? Additionally, in what ways are the Services supporting servicewomen at increased risk for unemployment, homelessness, and suicide?

Army: Mr. John Rizkallah, Assistant Deputy for Education and Assistance

The Soldier for Life- Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) is guided by DoD policy and law. It is meant to synchronize Army transition efforts and provide customized transition services to prepare transitioning soldiers and their families for civilian life and connect them to civilian communities. Efforts began in 2010 when the original Transition Assistance Program, which had been implemented during Operation DESERT STORM and Operation DESERT SHIELD, was revamped to better address the needs of soldiers. It was determined that soldiers would need more assistance than what was provided 90 days prior to separation from Service. On June 19, 2014, the Army rebranded the Army Career and Alumni Program to SFL-TAP as part of the “soldier for life” concept.

SFL-TAP is intended to provide soldiers the skills they will need to be ready to fight and for life. The program consists of two essential components: (1) prepare and (2) connect. The “prepare” component focuses on the soldier meeting the 12 Career Readiness Standards (CRS) (as dictated by law and DoD policy) and participating in the Career Skills Program (CSP). The CRS are introduced early and throughout a soldier’s career with touch points at first duty station-home station drill, first year of service, reenlistments, deployment-mobilization, promotion, and transition. Data is tracked and reported via TAP XXI (the Army’s records system) and through the Defense Manpower Data Center. The CSP offers various ways for the soldier to take advantage of Army resources to build professional skills and prepare for work in the private sector. For instance, the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line tool (COOL) helps soldiers find information on certifications and licenses related to their occupational specialties. Soldiers are instructed to begin the transition process 12–18 months before they separate from the Service, or if retiring, 12–24 months before retirement. The Capstone event requires the soldier to leverage all things he or she has learned and worked on during the previous phases of the transition process. If for any reason the soldier is found to be ill prepared for transition, the Army will offer a “warm handoff” to appropriate individuals or agencies that can better prepare the soldier for separation or retirement. At least 80 percent of soldiers are deemed ready to separate. The “connect” component of SFL-TAP focuses solely on the “soldier for life” concept, which aims to connect the Army with governmental and community efforts to build relationships that facilitate successful reintegration of soldiers, retired soldiers, veterans, and their families to keep them resilient and instill their values, ethos, and leadership within communities. All soldiers with 180 days of continuous active duty service must participate in SFL-TAP. As of FY 2015, 110,000 soldiers received transition assistance with support from 700 counselors/staff at 75 locations worldwide.

SFL-TAP administers three questionnaires to all soldiers who participate in transition activities to assess outcomes. Feedback has indicated that soldiers desire more flexibility under the SFL-TAP.

Marine Corps: Mr. Shawn Conlon, Branch Head, Personal and Professional Development, Marine and Family Programs Division

Mr. Conlon focused on the unique aspects of the Marine Corps' transition readiness program, since there is overlap among all of the Services' transition programs. The focus for the Marine Corps is threefold: make Marines, win battles, and return quality citizens. Mr. Conlon presented an overview of the Marine for Life Cycle to describe the transition action points the Marine must complete. The goal is to motivate Marines toward action and to convey that each individual has a personal responsibility to prepare for reentry to civilian society.

There are two specific action points that require the Marine to focus on transition from service. The first point occurs when the Marine enters his or her first permanent duty station. At this time, the Marine is required to take a half-day seminar to become oriented to the concept that someday he or she will no longer be in the Service. Mr. Conlon informed the Committee that many Marines serve only one enlistment; therefore, it is crucial that the Marine take advantage of educational or professional (i.e., apprenticeships, credentialing) opportunities while still in the Marine Corps. The second action point occurs nearer to when the Marine will transition out of the Service. Marines are required to spend five days at training sessions where they focus on life after the Service. These trainings include a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits briefing, U.S. Department of Labor (DoL) workshops, and pre-separation counseling. The Capstone event is the culmination of these trainings; it requires the Marine to meet face-to-face with a commander to discuss the Marine's future. Guidance for the Capstone is being updated to ensure the Marine Corps is doing all it can to foster positive conversations and steer Marines away from adverse outcomes.

DoD's "skill bridge authority" allows separating Marines to take part in internships, skills training, and/or job shadowing prior to leaving the Service so that Marines have more opportunity to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the private sector. Finally, the Marine for Life Cycle effort works to increase the resilience of veteran Marines by keeping them connected with each other through social media. Mr. Conlon explained that almost everywhere in the United States, small groups of veteran Marines form and stay connected.

Mr. Conlon reported that there are no transition programs specific to women or any subset of the population. The Marine Corps chose, for pragmatic and social reasons, not to segregate or otherwise divide Marines. Approximately 200 Marines complete a transition action point per week. The Marine Corps does not have the resources available to cater to smaller groups or subpopulations, and feels that segregating subpopulations can create social stigma and spotlight individuals.

Navy: Mr. Tom Yavorski, Executive Director, 21st Century Sailor Office

Mr. Yavorski informed the Committee that the Navy has redesigned its Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to provide sailors with the information and skills needed to meet new DoD CRS. All active and reserve personnel who served 180 days or more on Title 10 Active Duty are required to receive pre-separation counseling, a VA benefits briefing, and the DoL Employment Workshop (DOLEW), unless otherwise exempted before separating or retiring. Mr. Yavorski reported that there are no Navy TAPs specifically for servicewomen; however, classes are tailored for seniority and are separate for reservists.

Similar to the other Services, the curriculum is focused on career readiness rather than transition. The DOLEW highlights the need for mentors and networking, and the Navy provides sailors a premium membership to the LinkedIn online professional network. The Navy also provides career ladders for every occupational specialty and rating—from E1 to E9—to inform sailors of what an equivalent job could be in the private sector. In addition, the Navy offers three tracks for further learning: higher education, career training, or entrepreneurship. Specifically for the entrepreneurship track, the Small Business Association offers both a two-day training and an eight-week online course. The Navy also emphasizes the importance of the VA benefits briefing, which was extended from two-and-a-half days to three full days.

At the Capstone event, it is the sailor's commander who determines if he or she is ready for transition. All Service members receive a CRS review; those members who do not meet CRS or are considered high risk receive a warm handoff to appropriate partner agencies. The handoffs are documented on DD Form 2958, "Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan Checklist." The Navy also developed the "Resilient Transition" curriculum module to be taken as part of TAP to ensure sailors are able to identify positive ways of coping with the stresses of change, especially during the transition from military to civilian life.

The Navy works to measure and improve TAP by gathering customer satisfaction information and using it to further improve program effectiveness. The Navy also developed measures of TAP processes, outputs, and outcomes, many of which are reported to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and uses the results to identify areas for improvement.

Air Force: Ms. Kim Yates, Assistant Deputy, Force Support and Family Programs in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force

Ms. Yates reported that the Air Force's goal is to ensure every departing or retiring airman completes TAP to have the tools needed for successful transition back into the private sector. The Air Force's TAP has been a robust program since the 1990s, even before it was mandatory, with a 95-percent participation rate. When congressional and White House initiatives in 2011 redesigned TAP to focus on improving veterans' success in obtaining employment, the Air Force emphasized cultivating partnerships with organizations outside of DoD—for example, DoL, the VA, the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Small Business Administration—to further support transitioning Service members. In addition, the Air Force seeks out information and feedback from airmen after they have left the Service to further inform TAP and related programs. A Performance Measure Working Group is tasked with developing output and outcome measures to methodically determine gaps in the program as well as successes and barriers for transitioning airmen. A review of the TAP curriculum is conducted annually.

TAP is meant to be less of a transition program and more focused on readiness. Therefore, TAP begins with professional development to foster a highly technically adept Air Force. Civilian credentialing is an option for Service members who complete training at many Air Force technical schools. All enlisted airmen are automatically enrolled in the Community College of the Air Force and are set to receive a regionally accredited two-year degree (associate's degree). The Air Force's COOL program (similar to the Army's COOL program mentioned earlier) provides funding for airmen to receive civilian credentials tied to their Air Force jobs.

As stated by the other Services, Ms. Yates explained that transition programs are offered to every separating or retiring military member. Approximately 42,000 airmen transition to the private

sector annually. The new TAP Military Life Cycle integrates TAP at key points throughout each airman's career (e.g., arrival at the first permanent duty station, deployment, promotion) and is meant to be tailored to meet each airman's specific needs. Airmen assigned to remote locations or deployed may satisfy TAP requirements online. The warm handoff, which takes place after the Capstone event but prior to the airman separating or retiring from the Air Force, is a way for the Air Force to assess the airman's vulnerability for homelessness and unemployment and provide further assistance, if needed.

Ms. Yates reported that there is no specific program for servicewomen leaving the Air Force.

Coast Guard: Mr. Rodney Whaley, Transition Program Manager, Coast Guard Office of Work-Life

Mr. Whaley reported that there are 13 Coast Guard offices through the United States, each with transition and relocation managers responsible for the Relocation Program, Spouse Employment Assistance Program, the Transition Program, and in some locations, the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program.

Mr. Whaley noted that Coast Guard faces unique challenges in terms of transition assistance. The Coast Guard is not base-centric, so service delivery challenges are similar to those for the DoD Reserve community. Staffing and funding for the Coast Guard is significantly less than for DoD. Because of geographic challenge and staffing limitations, most communication with transitioning members is through e-mail or by telephone.

The legacy TAP requirements in 10 U.S.C. § 1142 dictated that pre-separation counseling was mandatory; however, members were strongly encouraged to participate in all other transition assistance services. Effective November 21, 2012, the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act requires all Service members separating or retiring from the Coast Guard to participate in all transition services, including pre-separation counseling, the DOLEW, and the VA benefits training. The Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force, co-chaired by DoD and the VA, provided an additional three overarching recommendations that greatly expanded TAP. As of this briefing, TAP requirements include pre-separation counseling; an Individual Transition Plan (ITP); the Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS) Curriculum (i.e., the DOLEW, transition overview, occupational specialty crosswalk, financial planning, individual/family considerations); an overview of VA benefits; optional tracks (Education, Technical, & Entrepreneur); and the Capstone event.

The Military Life Cycle Transition Model requires a Service member to initiate an Individual Development Plan (IDP) at his or her first permanent duty station. The IDP, which targets the Service member meeting the CRS upon leaving the Service, will be mandatorily updated, modified, and tracked at different points during the military career and will require command "coaching." Achievement of the CRS, a viable ITP, and the Capstone event verification remain critical final components in the Military Life Cycle Transition Model.

Discussion

LTC (Ret) Park noted that she has observed the private sector requesting very specific certifications that do not often match those held by a new veteran. While the veteran most likely has the proper experience for the job, on paper, the veteran does not meet the qualifications. LTC (Ret) Park asked how this issue could be better addressed. Mr. John Rizkallah (Army) responded that the Army could provide a completely separate briefing on certifications, and the need to do

better has been recognized. More occupational specialties are allowing soldiers to get industry-recognized certifications; additionally, while on active duty, soldiers are able to access COOL and receive tuition assistance to ease the process. The CSP offers numerous skills programs for soldiers within 180 days of transitioning; although the CSP does not typically provide the opportunity to become certified, it offers on-the-job training and the opportunity to be placed in a position post-transition. Soldiers are also able to use their GI Bill education benefits to pursue certification. The Marine Corps offers similar programs and opportunities to obtain certification. Ms. Yates explained that the Air Force has schools in place that offer private sector certifications.

Ms. Medina requested more information on the Community College of the Air Force and inquired whether other Services offer a similar opportunity. The Marine Corps offers opportunities for Marines to receive quality undergraduate and graduate education (e.g., voluntary tuition assistance). To avail themselves of the opportunities, institutions need to be accredited by DoL and DoD. The Marine Corps is exploring the possibility of adopting a community college model similar to that used by the Air Force. Both the Navy and the Army offer voluntary education programs for Service members to receive certifications or course credits. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) added that the Army encourages soldiers to use tuition assistance (approximately \$4,500 per year) and encourages every soldier to earn a degree. The opportunities are there, but the challenge is reaching soldiers early and developing a plan for them to take advantage of available resources.

CAPT Kelley emphasized that the goal of this briefing was to learn about the support provided to servicewomen transitioning out of the Service since they are at high risk for unemployment and suicide. She noted that none of the Services reported having special programs oriented toward women, but inquired whether measures of effectiveness reflect the concerns men and women raise. Mr. Conlon (Marine Corps) responded that the VA speaks to the benefits available to Service members as they transition out, but the Services have little control and can lose touch with the Service member after separation. If the veteran does not respond to Service surveys, then there is no way to track the individual post-Service. There is the potential for them to become unreachable like other civilians the government does not track. In practice, the Service Chiefs are held responsible for adverse outcomes reported in the media. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) agreed that data is the essential ingredient for preventing adverse outcomes. It is projected that OSD leadership will meet with OMB to push for access to additional data. Once the soldier has transitioned, DoD is not guaranteed data or feedback from DoL or the VA; those agencies do not have a mechanism in place to track a former Service member on DoD's behalf. It is unclear what the long-term success of the warm handoff is, but there is a push for more interagency support.

SMA (Ret) Kenneth Preston asked the Services what types of resistance they have encountered, especially regarding budgets, in their efforts to ensure Service members a safe and efficient transition to civilian life. Furthermore, he probed whether Congress and DoD have been supportive on transition-related issues. The Services said they are receiving support and that there has been interest related to the certification programs offered. The Coast Guard noted that its funding does not come from DoD, which can pose a challenge. In addition, a serious concern faced by the Coast Guard and other Services is how different states view certifications issued by the Services.

Ms. Hawkes inquired as to what the warm handoff looks like in practice and if DoL and the VA are the only sources for data on the success of referrals. Mr. Conlon (Marine Corps) explained

that DoD policy requires the warm handoff to be to certain agencies, such as DoL and the VA. One of the challenges of tracking the warm handoff is that many of the Marines that separate from Service return to their home areas rather than stay near military installations. It is more difficult to track them when they are not near their former installations or local agencies where the installations could refer them. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) admitted that the Army is struggling to establish a data feedback loop with external partners who participate in the warm handoff. It is hard to obtain reliable data on handoff outcomes from partners because the data is not always recorded. In addition, the commanders who provide counseling during the Capstone event have not yet transitioned themselves. There is debate around the level of information commanders are able to provide if they have not yet gone through the transition process themselves.

Gen. (Ret) Wolfenbarger thanked the Services and shared that she was pleased to see the interaction and congeniality across Services. She then acknowledged that no Service reported having a specific program for women and asked the Services if they were aware of Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (VWISE). While VWISE is not a part of TAP, it is a program for servicewomen who are interested in entrepreneurship and has a 100-percent reported satisfaction rate. Gen. (Ret) Wolfenbarger shared that she was recently exposed to this program and learned that most participants found out about VWISE through word of mouth, meaning there is no systematic promotion of this program. Gen. (Ret) Wolfenbarger asked if there is a better way to publicize VWISE. Mr. Yavorski (Navy) countered that the VA and DoL have many programs targeted to Service members. SMA (Ret) Preston added that VWISE is affiliated with Syracuse University.

Maj. Gen. Dunbar asked several questions related to COOL: (1) who funds it, (2) what role OSD plays, (3) who sets up local area internships, and (4) do Service members complete internships during duty time. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) explained that each program is set up differently depending on the installation. Since the internship is scheduled to take place within the soldier's last 180 days of active duty service, it is ultimately up to the soldier's commander to determine if a soldier can participate. If there is a mission emergency, then the soldier can be pulled out of the internship. All internship organizations enter into an agreement with the Army and must be vetted. Ms. Yates (Air Force) added that there is an office within DoD that coordinates with the Services and guides the credentialing. The funds to support COOL are taken out of each Service's respective budgets. Ms. Conlon (Marine Corps) clarified that licenses are issued by state entities, whereas certifications are granted by industry associations. Although COOL offers Service members the opportunity to obtain certifications or licenses, no one from DoD directly issues them. Mr. Yavorski (Navy) clarified that the employment skills training is mandatory—it is not up to a sailor's commander whether he or she attends—and that obtaining commander support for sailor participation in the internship program remains a challenge.

Dr. Betty Moseley Brown, Associate Director of the VA Center for Women Veterans, volunteered to update the Committee on VWISE. VWISE is a training program for female veterans interested in entrepreneurship.

VADM (Ret) Pottenger asked who is waived from participating in TAP. Mr. Conlon (Marine Corps) explained that any Service member who is on active duty for 180 days is required to go through the TAP training. VADM (Ret) Pottenger then inquired why the compliance rate is so low if the training is mandatory. Mr. Rizkallah responded that there are challenges with the data reporting system as well as gaps in identifying eligible Service members.

Ms. McAleer asked if a female veteran could take advantage of the resources made available by the Center for Women Veterans regardless of the length of the term she served or how long ago she transitioned. Dr. Moseley Brown responded that the information that the center provides is always free. There are time limits on former Service members' access to financial resources. Gen. (Ret) Wolfenbarger added that VWISE is making efforts to reach previous generations of women veterans.


MG (Ret) Macdonald acknowledged the collegiality of the Services and noted how far it has come. MG (Ret) Macdonald inquired as to whether there were ways to measure success in increasing the employability of transitioning Service members. He noted, for instance, that the Army has reduced DoL unemployment payments to veterans by millions of dollars over the years. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) explained that the best way to reduce Army unemployment is to refine TAP. Unemployment compensation is a lagging indicator and results from a few different factors. He reasoned that while the Army can make every effort to ensure the soldier is career ready before leaving the Service, ultimately, if the individual decides to take a break from his or her career, then there is nothing to prevent the individual from collecting unemployment. Mr. Rizkallah (Army) admitted that he was not sure of a way to overcome that specific challenge; however, Congress recently passed a policy that prevents Service members from collecting unemployment while receiving GI Bill education benefits. Mr. Conlon (Marine Corps) responded that the Marine Corps' program is not mature enough to consider certification as part of the evaluation process.


Ms. Erica Harless, Director of the e-Mentor Leadership Program, informed the Committee that she offers a program available to all Service members, without expiration. She said her organization collects data on those who participate in the program and she is willing to share the data with the Services so that there can be a better understanding of what is needed during the warm handoff. Ms. Harless recognized how difficult it can be to collect and measure data to determine both program success and individual success.

Final Remarks

Designated Federal Officer and DACOWITS Military Director, COL Kominiak, thanked the remaining attendees and closed the public meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.


Report Submitted by:
COL Aimee Kominiak, USA
DACOWITS Military Director


Report Certified by:
LtGen (Ret) F.C. Wilson, USMC
DACOWITS Chair

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

LtGen (Ret) Frances Wilson (Chair)

CMSgt (Ret) Bernise Belcer (Vice Chair)

Dr. Kristy Anderson

Ms. Teresa Christenson

Maj Gen (Ret) Sharon Dunbar

CAPT (Ret) Beverly Kelley

MG (Ret) John Macdonald

Ms. Monica Medina

LTC (Ret) Hae-Sue Park

VADM (Ret) Carol Pottenger

Gen (Ret) Janet Wolfenbarger

Col (Ret) John Boggs

FLTCM (Ret) Jacqueline DiRosa

Ms. Sharlene Hawkes

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Lindenmeyer

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Mr. Brian Morrison

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