



September 25, 2014 Minutes
North Carolina National Guard Headquarters

Present: William Abb, Jennifer Achin, Ernie Allis, Wesley Alston, Archie Barrow, Ann Marie Beall, Michael Bishop, Bob Borman, Drew Borman, Janet Bradbury, Tom Bradford, Dr. Terri Brown, Brenda Brubaker, Brandon Buscher, Nancy Chastain, William Collins, Trina Condit, Geoff Cramer, Dr. Eric Crawford, Karen Creech, Justin Davis, Hank Debnam, Donna Dennis, Brad Domorski, Lane Dyer, Paul Evans, Dr. Wei Li Fang, Bryan Fox, Moses Gloria, Emily Godfrey, Bob Goodale, James Gorham, Bill Gorman, Regina Hanna, Kathryn Hare, Charlotte Harmon, Judy Harmon, Angela Harper, John Harris, Anita Hartzel, Phil Hewett, James Hicks, Charlene Irvin, Victoria Johanningsmeier, Susan Johnson, Shawn Jones, Christopher Keon, Stan Kimer, Terry King, Kimberly Lindsey, Bobbie Lowe, Victor Miller, Jeff Mobley, Tina Nelson-Moss, Vince Newton, Ann Noe, COL Paul O'Toole, Sheryl Pacelli, Ilario Pantano, Melissa Payne, Dr. Gregory Perkins, Stuart Rafin, Cheryl Rawls, Lea Ann Richardson, Sarah Rogers, Chuck Sanchez, Judy Sanderson, COL Vernon Simpson, Charlie Smith, Elree Smith, Michael Smith, Tony Sowards, Belivia Spaulding, Flo Stein, Annette Stevenson, LTC Lee Suttee, Cindy Swinkels, Doug Taggart, Mark Teachey, Matt Thewes, Kathleen Vollandt, Lucas Vrbsky, Brian Ward, Dara West, Heather Whillier, Janice White, GEN Cornell Wilson, and John Wormen

Flo opened up the program and invited attendees to introduce themselves. Lt Col Leland Suttee, Commanding Officer of Wounded Warrior Battalion-East, was the first presenter. He is responsible for the care of the wounded, ill, and injured east of Mississippi River. While the number of wounded is decreasing dramatically, the long-term effects of both visible and invisible wounds are beginning to show. His mission is to provide leadership, and his goal is to transition service members back to their unit or civilian. In 2014, 124 transitioned, with 66 on the educational track, 38 on the employment track (22 in internships, 12 in direct job placement, and 4 entrepreneurs), 17 homebound, and 3 returned to full duty.

Dr. Beth Barton, program manager for personal and professional development for Marine and Family Programs at Lejeune and New River, spoke about the life cycle approach that they currently use with transition. As soon as Marines arrive at their first permanent duty station, they work with a transition counselor to initiate an individualized plan that looks at what they intend to do after their marine career. Marines participate in a five-day transition readiness seminar about a year away from their EOS (end of service) date and must embark on one of 4 pathways (university, trade school, entrepreneur, employment). Marines also have optional tracks of 2 days in length (e.g., Boots to Business, career tech education track, accessing higher education track) and receive one-on-one counseling. In addition, transition readiness services include seminars, advising, and expos/hiring events.

Mr. Gloria suggested that the VA be invited to present on local services and supports. Mr. Harris reiterated the importance of collaborating with state and local agencies and getting them involved in the reintegration of military-connected personnel. Ms. Irvin said that the MCOs (managed care organizations) have large community development departments that can

help veterans and their families with housing. Dr. Barton said that there is a need to improve follow-up and to educate their staff about existing community resources.

Ms. Whillier presented on the NC Heroes Fund. It provides financial aid to veterans who have recently discharged. \$.889 of each dollar goes to financial aid. Ms. Whillier is the only paid staff and works part time. Typical applicants are those whose VA benefits have not yet kicked in. The Fund does not write checks to recipients but on their behalf. 75% of applicants are approved. While there is no cap, the average grant is \$1500.

Ms. Stevenson works with minority and veteran-owned businesses at SAS and tries to get existing businesses to mentor those that are getting started. Her responsibilities are to support, educate, and connect veterans in NC. Veterans do hire veterans, and she is helping build these networks.

Mr. Kimer works with the Carolina Diversity Council, which is sponsoring a Boots to Suits event at the Harris Conference Center at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte on October 28 from 10 to 4 (<http://ndccarolinas.org>).

Mr. Taggart announced that a student identifier will be used to associate every child who has an immediate family member in the military. While it is optional this year, it will become mandatory next year. Other initiatives include helping military kids find out about military careers and providing academic credit for military experience for leadership and instructor roles in military (receive 5 years for every 10 years in the military).

Mr. Smith, Operation North State, provides NC products for NC troops. This initiative is supported by NC corporations (www.operationnorthstate.org). He also announced a bass fishing festival for 275 wounded warriors on October 17.

Mr. Alston noted that they are in the final stages of developing a newsletter for NCWorks.

Ms. Lindsey reported that the Society of Human Resource Management Council is placing veterans at its 18 chapters. They are providing education sessions for employers on the value of hiring veterans and partnering with corporations like Metlife.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has directed the sponsoring of public town hall events. Winston-Salem held their event on September 4, with 280 in attendance. They also served 175 veterans in a claims workshop. They will be conducting quarterly town hall events at each VA facility. American Legion is conducting an outreach event to help veterans in Fuquay-Varina on October 21-23.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Volk said that Wayne County is holding a Stand Down in Herman Park on October 2.

Ms. Beall said that UNC general administration has just launched 8 interactive modules—the North Carolina Military Positioning System—to allow users to explore all higher education opportunities.

Mr. Teachey coordinates the first veterans treatment court in Harnett County, NC. Seven veterans will be graduating in November. In November, they will also be celebrating their one-year anniversary.

Mr. Gloria said that Vet Centers are under VA Central Office. They primarily provide readjustment counseling and have 2 mobile vehicles in Greensboro and Greenville. Upcoming events include a Stand Down at the South Wilmington Street Shelter on October 17; Military and Veterans Appreciation Day at the NC State Fairgrounds on October 22; and Veterans Day parades in Charlotte, Fayetteville, and Raleigh on November 8.

Any woman veteran can call Dress for Success (919/286-2186) to obtain a suit and accessories for a job interview.

Mr. Cramer talked about collaboration between Futures Inc. and Cisco. They have an industry initiative to bridge the gap of veterans and a career in technology that they are pushing out to local bases. They are also transitioning everyone to eBenefits, with 400 case managers nationwide/

Mr. Collins said that they have had 1100 programs and have talked with employers/corporations in every one of the 100 counties. They encourage and ask employers to consider veterans and military personnel in their hiring.

The legislature has asked for outcome data associated with veteran initiatives in the State. Mr. Pantano asked attendees to provide outcome data related to the services that they provide—the types of services that have been provided and the number of veterans and family who have benefited from the services.

The next meeting on September 25 will feature Housing and Homelessness and be in the Emergency Management Situation Room.