



August 27, 2015 GWG Meeting Minutes

Present: John Albertson, Amber Alexander, Terry Allebaugh, Wesley Alston, Dale Badgett, Catherine Barker, Saskia Barnard, Archie Barrow, Beth Barton, Nicole Bauer, Mary Catherine Brown, Brenda Brubaker, Joshua Cain, Ray Cerda, Kelli Davis, Donna Dennis, Lynn Douthoutt, Jeff Doyle, John Falkenbury, Wei Li Fang, Ph.D., Pat Fitzgerald, Reginna Ford, LTC Chris Forsythe, Nicole French, Psy.D., Dee Gardner, JR Gorham, Garrett Hamm, Judy Harmon, Mark Haupt, Lisa Haynes, Katrina Holley, Brittany Hunter, Andy Jackson, Zachary Kendall, Chris Keon, Tom Kilkenney, Alyce Knaflich, Victoria Knott, Tammy Lester, Dennis Lewis, Kimberly Lindsay, Deborah Lohan, Ms. Mahoney, Jerome Malloy, Ursula Mannix, Enrique McClymont, Mike McMichael, Larry McMullen, Sarah Miller, George Millsaps, Ed.D., Brian Mingia, Brenda Monforti, Greg Moore, Terry Earthwind Nichols, Josh Norris, Ilario Pantano, Mike Penny, Melanie Piedra, Cheryl Rawls, Martha Roark, Dale Robbins, Stuart Ruffin, Dr. Lisa Sacco, Brianna Sampson, Kristy Schwartz, Carol Sharpe, Robert Sherwood, Anne Showalter, Mary Skov, Jeff Smith, Tony Sowards, Flo Stein, Annette Stevenson, Jim Swain, Brenda Swartz, Robert Tabares, Doug Taggart, Don Timmons, Rebekah Torres, Eric Truesdale, Kathleen Volandt, Joe Wescott, Ed.D., Kristina Wilhelmson, GEN Cornell Wilson, Laessa Witt, Lisa Wolf, Chris Young, and Rachel Libelo Zeitler

Mr. Pantano handed out a survey asking for attendees to offer suggestions as to future topics of the GWG meetings. Dr. Fang will collect responses at the end of the meeting and analyze and report them back to the Chair and Vice Chairs.

This month's topic was *Nonprofit Resources for Veterans*. Ms. Rawls introduced all presenters (see bios on the website). Ms. Lester emphasized the importance of Veterans having jobs and presented on a DOC-developed data-driven website that can be used for Veterans and their families. The site includes data for communities, business, and a mapping tool that may help businesses succeed and assist people in getting jobs. The site has over 25 sources (e.g., American Community Survey data) and 50 series of data and was designed by geography (from counties to regions to states for comparison purposes) and block groups (small data). Ms. Lester provided examples of three out of fifteen types of runs that a user can do: (1) occupational employment and wages (this can help a user see what skills might be transferable from a military to a civilian career), (2) custom radius report by community/county and use drive time by variables including veteran status, and (3) business listing by industry, company name, or keyword. She announced that the 2015 NC military economic impact study is available (<http://www.nccommerce.com/Portals/47/Publications/Industry%20Reports/The%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20the%20Military%20on%20North%20Carolina.pdf>). Reginna Ford can assist with interpreting the findings of the report.

LTC Forsythe works on reintegration issues for GEN Dempsey. He emphasized the all volunteer force and how the armed forces experience leads to growth and new values as they learn to become a member of a team in order to work collectively to achieve the mission. On the other hand, the transition to civilian life seems lonely and challenging, and it is the role of reintegration to help individuals better navigate the civilian world. Value sets change as service members go from selfless to selfish and reprioritize to self-preservation and providing for one's family. Whereas military induction is finite and intense, civilian induction involves individual choice—of system, values, and culture. The mission of Office of Reintegration: to support the successful reintegration of veterans and the military family by "(1) facilitating inter-service and inter-agency coordination, (2) fostering community solutions through effective public-private partnerships; and (3) furthering civilian-military understanding." For more information, go to www.jcs.mil/CORe, where a series of white papers, replete with recommendations, can be found.

Ms. Alexander works for the American Red Cross, which provides 40% of the nation's blood supply. They work in four core areas: Veterans and service members and their families, Board of Veterans Affairs (BVA), providing resiliency training (e.g., reconnection workshops, courses, volunteer opportunities, and service), and connecting families with local community resources. She noted that she heavily uses the NC4VETS resource manual since referral is key to connecting Veterans to the resources that they need. She said that referral sources need to provide instructions along with phone numbers and track what happens after a request. Referral sources need to be responsive and follow through and follow up on each case so that *No Man is Left Behind*.

Ms. Sharpe said that the mission of the Wounded Warrior Project is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. Their teams work in the following areas: (1) engagement team: alumni, family support program, benefits service, peer support, resource number, (2) mind team: Project Odyssey (using nature and recreation to heal the spirit), independence program, developing long-term support and trust, (3) body team: physical health and wellness team such as Run to Somewhere and Soldier Ride ; and (4) economic empowerment team, which includes education services, Transition Training Academy, Warriors to Work team, and transitioning to the workforce after injury. She also reiterated the importance of Veterans knowing what is available. The organization started with a backpack to an injured warrior at Walter Reed Hospital, and the next day, they asked for an additional 100 backpacks. For more information, go to: <http://woundedwarriorproject.org>.

Mr. Falkenbury said that the USO is an organization of hope. The USO was started in 1941 to support troops and is congressionally chartered although it does not receive federal support. The oldest continuously operating USO started in Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, NC in December 1941 and has been in the same location since February 1942. Even though Bob Hope and Robin Williams were big supporters of the USO, it is not about entertainment but about services. In NC, there are 5 fixed centers in the Raleigh-Durham International Airport Center, the Charlotte Douglas International Airport Center, the Fayetteville Airport Center, Jacksonville Center, and Ft Bragg Center; satellite support centers, and a mobile unit (<http://uso-nc.org>). The USO provides emergency support to the NC National Guard. It is for service members while they are deployed and for 18 months afterwards. In 2014, the USO provided over 570,000 services and programs in the State. Not only does the USO provide direct support to troops, but it also provides critical family support. It offers reset programs for both Veterans and family members to improve career transition, resiliency, and wellness. Mr Falkenbury stressed the importance of destigmatizing post-traumatic stress disorder by going from post-traumatic stress to post traumatic resiliency. He said that the military will attend USO workshops because they view them as being outside the military.

Ms. Stein noted that Mr. Pantano and Dr. Bruce Capehart (Durham VAMC) were on NPR about compassionate assistance for those Veterans considering suicide (<http://wunc.org/post/experts-question-common-statistic-do-22-veterans-day-commit-suicide#stream/0>). Governor McCrory has recently appointed a Task Force on Mental Health and Substance Abuse; Dr. Capehart is one of the members.

Mr. Robbins with CISCO said that November 6th is the annual Veteran Transition Day and would like to work with someone at the NCNG.

Ms. Stevenson said that they are holding their annual procurement summit, which includes a business matchmaking session.

Mr. Truesdale said that they are celebrating a Vietnam Veteran's remains coming home on Veterans Day. He also mentioned a Smithfield event with Cheryl Rawls and thanked her participation.

Mr. Timmons spoke of the popularity of the coffee events in the Triad, which are sponsored by local businesses. Currently, they are offering 7 monthly coffee events in 7 counties. with VA staff and Veteran Service Officers attending all events. They have representation from Veterans who served in WWII, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Afghanistan and Iraq. These events are becoming meaningful to the participants. He is willing to share his experience with other communities interested in starting up these coffees. On October 25, they will host a WWII celebration dinner, with at least 100 veterans in the room.

Mr. Pantano encouraged attendees to add their community events to the website, <http://nc4vets.com>. He also mentioned the First Strike Military Expo, which is targeting young Veterans to hook up with the American Legion.

Mr. Jackson of the NC National Guard said that he is willing to assist if anyone needs to make a Guard contact/

Mr. Taggart announced that this year is the first year for the military identifier on student records. This information will be collected in all school systems in NC. The law was passed in 2013, but this is the first year of implementation.

Mr. McClymont said that September is Suicide Awareness Month. The NC National Guard is hosting a Gratitude Walk on September 12 and is encouraging additional vendors to take part. They will have a suicide survivor as the guest speaker. They are offering a t-shirt for the first 200 participants. This year's theme is the *Power of 1*.

Mr. Cain said that the American Red Cross is conducting 5 workshops for adults and 2 workshops for military children. They are also targeting military communities to prevent deaths by fires and putting in free smoke alarms.

Ms. Fitzgerald said that Congresswoman Renee Ellmers is hosting the 4th annual employment fair at Fayetteville Tech on October 13 from 10 am to 1 pm. For more information, contact her at 910/230-1910 or pat.fitzgerald@mail.house.gov.

Ms. Schwartz runs a program for Veterans who have become farmers. They are trying to get their produce to the marketplace.

Ms. Rawls said that it now takes 70 days to get a homeless Veteran's claim done. There are currently 22,000 rating claims pending 99 days. The VBA has dropped the backlog by 84%. There are now only 4000 claims pending over 125 days.

GEN Wilson said that the Governor has worked hard on behalf of Veterans. The recent passage of legislation allowing for Veterans to use their military experience as credit has led to the first police officer being hired in Jacksonville using his military experience.

The next meeting of the Governor's Working Group will be on September 24, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the Situation Room of Emergency Management at the NC National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. The topic will be *Addressing Disabilities and Employment*.