



#### March 24, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Present: Terry Allebaugh, Wesley Alston, Catherine Baruer, Will Betts, Mathias Bishop, Michael Bishop, Andrew Blizzard, Wayne Boswell, William Boyle, Karen Bozard, Juanita Brewington, Brenda Brubaker, Michelle Brinton, Joshua Cain, Elizabeth Callahan, Saima Cardwell, Jennifer Chauncey, Lisa Childers, Cajun Comeau, , Paul Dillon, Jeff Doyle, Philip Duncan, Vinnie Duncan, Lane Dyer, Khan Eakin, Robert Elliott, Reginna Ford, Emily Godfrey, Paul Gradus, William Grant, Judy Harmon, John Harris, Erin Hastings, Jim Hoffman, Katrina Holley, Charlene Irvin, Andy Jackson, Tiffany Jacobs, Victoria Johanningsmeier, Randy Johnson, Megan Jordan, Terri Kane, Jessi LaCosta, Leslie Lingo, Martha Lobo, Ralph Markwood, Tan McGill, George Miller, Brenda Monforti, Sandra Moonert, Greg Moore, William Morales, Lynn Newsom, Raquel Painter, Melanie Piedra, Jay Price, Brian Propst, James Prosser, Nicole Purdy, Brian Queen, Cheryl Rawls, Jean Reaves, Rhea Rollman, Jamie Roseborough, Austen Shearer, Rob Sherwood, Jeff Smith, Annette Stevenson, Danielle Sullivan, Gretchen Swank, Mark Teachey, Dr. Paul Toriello, Rebecca Torres, Eric Truesdale, Bob Uber, Catrina Veinrich, Lucas Vrbsky, Dr. Joe Wescott, Elizabeth Weston, Stephen Wilkins, Secretary General Cornell Wilson, and Andrew Workman

Ms. Rawls opened the meeting, welcoming all and asking attendees to introduce themselves. Secretary General Wilson thanked DoD presenters for coming.

Ms. Rawls introduced Wayne Boswell is the Director of Private and Public Engagement, Transition to Veterans Program Office while Jamie Roseborough serves as the Private and Public Engagement Specialist. The Transition to Veterans Program Office (TVPO) is housed in the Office of the Secretary of Defense under Readiness. Mr. Boswell started his presentation by saying that he had heard that NC "got it going on". He praised the State for doing a good job bringing all the programs together for a single cause—to give a hand-up to service members and Veterans. Service Members and Veterans have essential skills and are needed in our communities. His office has been working to develop national pipelines, and NC has exemplified this effort, with the Governor promoting the employment of Veterans. In 2011, Congress passed the Hire Heroes Act because studies had shown that military members were leaving the service and not prepared to enter the workforce. Federal mandates call for military branches to prepare Veterans for employment by offering training in resume writing, networking, and talking about oneself with confidence. The branches now offer training programs, which prepare them for life in a way that makes sense. What is missing is the connection to the private sector, universities, and other community partners. He has met with workforce development to develop training pipelines in high tech manufacturing, agriculture, and energy, which are three key areas of industrial growth. Military members have the talent and essential skills to go into these areas, and industry knows the value of hiring our Veterans.

Ms. Rawls introduced the theme for the day—taking care of our Veterans in rural and super rural areas. She introduced Dr. Toriello, an associate professor in the Department of Addictions and Rehabilitation Studies at East Carolina University. He heads Operation Re-entry, an ECU-wide initiative, supported through a federal grant from SAMHSA. Operation Re-entry offers a mobile clinic in rural areas, including homeless Veterans. In their model, they engage with Veterans about their use of technology. They are providing technology-assisted care in a digital age. While their home base is in Greenville, their catchment area includes Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune as well as the rural areas surrounding the bases. The project is faculty-directed, student-operated, is multidisciplinary, and utilizes vocational counselors. They engage Veterans where they find them—in shelters, soup kitchens, and libraries—and network with the community. People have reached out to them, with several VA employees escorting

them to homeless kitchens and opening doors. Not only do they utilize their mobile clinic Rover, but they also use texts, emails, phone calls, biofeedback, teleconferencing, health behavior app developed at the University of Wisconsin through a NIH grant, and electronic health records. One of their guiding principles is introducing a little tech at a time since it could be outdated by time you finish learning it. They are trying to figure out how to keep life line intact and what happens when there are triggers for using alcohol and/or drugs. They are using technology for person-to-person contacts although not everyone has smartphone. They are mostly seeing Veterans from the Korea conflict, Vietnam War, and the wars before 2001. Most are not using text messaging. One of the lessons is to choose the technology wisely. Teleconferencing is iffy, and there is an absence of smartphones. They also have to figure out the appropriate contact dosage. They are currently not offering financial counseling but it is a great idea. Dr. Toriello gave his phone (252/744-6297) so folks can contact him directly. He was asked if there is a business plan or model to share, and he said not yet.

Ms. Rollman, a NC Military OneSource consultant, is here to support service members. Funded by the US Department of Defense, all services are free to active duty and their families if they are in the DARE system. Services are available online, with live chat; video, and phone calls with a provider for assistance. They have a number of websites and offer training. Each person can get a personal counselor. They offer financial counseling; tax services; specialty consultation; health and wellness coaching; career; and educational services including tutoring services for children. Their advice is free, and they offer peer-to-peer support. All counselors are licensed, with a master's degree. There are also educational and career opportunity programs for spouses. Ms. Rollman encouraged the audience to call the center if they can't find something. In addition, they have podcasts and an online library. They are available on a 24/7/365 basis. Service members are eligible for services for up to 6 months post-discharge from the service, but all websites are free.

Mr. Queen serves as Community & Economic Development Specialist for USDA Rural Development in North Carolina. He reiterated Mr. Boswell's statement that we don't need more programs, just better coordination. The USDA Rural Development have more than 40 programs. Each state gets federal funding and supports its programs in four areas: utilities, housing, community facilities, and business and cooperative program. The state has an office in each of 6 areas. He can be reached at [brian.queen@nc.usda.gov](mailto:brian.queen@nc.usda.gov) or 919/873-2072.

Mr. Johnson works in Rural Health Initiatives for VISN 6 of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2008, Congress established the VA Office of Rural Health. They collaborate with other VA offices, Federal partners, state partners, and rural communities. Their focus is on optimizing available resources/programs through available and emerging technologies; establishing new access points to care; promoting the education and advancement of current VA health care providers; and emphasizing the recruitment and development of the next generation of VA providers to care for our rural Veterans. The Office of Rural Health is currently redefining its programs to focus on national promising practices and access to care. Recently, the VA rolled out the Choice Program, so that Veterans living more than 40 miles from a VA medical care facility and have been or will be waiting more than 30 days for VA medical care can request and receive care in their community. To enroll in the Choice Program, call 866-606-8198. Of the 724,295 Veterans living in North Carolina, 298,944 are enrolled in the VA Health System. Rural enrollees number 118,309 while Highly Rural enrollees are 1,853. In NC, 9.2% are women Veterans, 51% are age 65 and older and 26% are between the ages of 50-64. VA rural sites of care include the 4 VA Medical Centers in Asheville, Durham, Fayetteville, and Salisbury; 13 Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs); 1 Outreach Clinic ; 2 Dialysis Centers; 2 Annexes; and 4 new Health Care Centers (HCCs) in Fayetteville, Greenville, Kernersville, and Wilmington. A recent reorganization of the VA resulted in VISN 6 serving NC and VA; WV is no longer a part of VISN 6.

Ms. Childers is the County Extension Director in Cumberland County for the NC Cooperative Extension. She heads an outreach program for NCSU and NC A&T in all 100 counties. They focus on 3 areas: agriculture; family and consumer sciences; and 4H for both civilian and military kids. They offer a civil affairs training in agriculture for military members who are sent overseas to do this work. Extension agents work with Fort Bragg to develop the training program. They also have a Master Gardener program, and Fort Bragg has a Wounded Warrior Tranquility Garden. Through these initiatives, some Veterans have become interested in farming and are linked with a farmer so they can see what it takes to be a farmer. Veterans learn how to develop a business plan and technical skills as well as equipment needs. Counties do have resources if Veterans are interested in going into agriculture. In June, a program will be offered at Fort Bragg for Veterans interested in becoming farmers. Someone noted that Archie's Acres program has a business plan at UC-Davis, CA. Robert Elliott is associated with the Farmer Veteran Coalition of NC; they have put together a 3-year comprehensive program to put Veterans into agriculture. Annette Stevenson said that Patricia Harris serves on the USDA Strike Force. She also said that NC VetBiz is working with Veteran farmers to come up with process. The Veterans Healing Farm (<http://veteranshealingfarm.org/>) is located in Hendersonville.

Ms. Duncan is a member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina State Grange. The Grange supports agriculture and building community. It is a nonprofit and nonpartisan. The entire family can be members. They offer youth development programs. She said that agriculture and agribusiness is the largest industry in NC, followed by Veterans. The Grange is hosting its 1<sup>st</sup> Veterans Career Day on June 24, from 10a-3p at Embassy Suites in Fayetteville.

Mr. Allebaugh is in charge of an initiative to end homelessness among our most vulnerable chronically homeless Veterans in NC. Endorsed by the Governor, the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs sponsors the initiative. The multidisciplinary and interagency team meets monthly to discuss strategies for ending Veteran homelessness. Recently, the Rapid Results Institute worked with 6 teams from across the State to end homelessness in their communities.

Ms. Rawls is the director of the regional office of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). She reminded the audience that the VBA has special lanes for Veterans with hardships. The Regional Office just went into the national work queue to ensure that Veterans can receive the same standard of care no matter where the claim is submitted. They work on the basis of "oldest out", so that the one that is pending for 120 days will go in front of ones pending for 90 days.

Ms. Newsom says that the Quaker House has been helping Veterans for 50 years. She is working with those incarcerated and calls them the forgotten and neglected. On April 11, they will hold a vigil in front of the special operations museum. She invited everyone to attend so there will be more media about Veterans in the and prison system.

Mr. Mike Bishop said that the Military Veterans Resource Coalition (MVRC) is holding a fundraiser on April 4 at California Pizza. 100% of the profits will go to Veterans through the MVRC.

Ms. McGill stated that Americorps has an initiative that trains service members, Veterans, and their families. She noted that April is the Month of the Military Child. They are hosting socials. For more information, contact Ms. McGill at [tan@activategood.org](mailto:tan@activategood.org).

Ms. Swank, EmployUs, is working with NC4ME to develop an EmployUs app that gets Veterans back to work. The app will highlight companies that post jobs for free.

Mr. Hoffman, American Heroes in NC, said that they are hosting a Veterans Appreciation Day in Kernersville on May 21. They will have many free activities as well as a 5K run in the morning and food trucks. For more information, contact [jim-hoffman1@live.com](mailto:jim-hoffman1@live.com)

Ms. Reaves invited people to attend the WRAL Freedom Balloon Fest in Fuqua-Varina during Memorial Day weekend (<http://www.wralfreedomballoonfest.com/>). They will feature a field of flags, and folks can dedicate a flag to a family member, unit, ship, or whatever. On Monday, the flags will go to the State Veterans Cemetery in Goldsboro.

Although Mr. Comeau works for the VA Central Office, he is stationed in NC. He stated his appreciation for what the people in the room are doing for Veterans. The VA wants to partner with existing groups and state agencies and facilitate relationships between government, organizations, civic groups, and the private sector and bring together into MyVA communities. In this way, Veterans can receive services seamlessly, so that gaps can be identified and bridging solutions be developed. Together we can do more for active military and Veterans in this State.

Ms. Piedra, Hope for the Warriors, says that the Charlotte and Jacksonville high schools are having fundraising events. Contact [mpiedra@hopeforthewarriors.org](mailto:mpiedra@hopeforthewarriors.org) for more information.

Mr. Miller, NC East Alliance, said that there are few outreach opportunities east of 95. He stated his interest in looking for others to work on agriculture opportunities. He can be contacted at [miller@nceast.org](mailto:miller@nceast.org).

The NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is hosting the Women Veterans Summit & Expo on May 25 at the McKimmon Conference and Training Center of North Carolina State University. Over 800 women veterans attended the first one in 2014. The event will showcase presenters and resources. It is open to both women and men.

Secretary General Wilson closed out the meeting.

The next meeting will feature NC Serves on Thursday, April 28, 2016, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the Situation Room of Emergency Management of the Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh. Please remember to register online by April 25.