



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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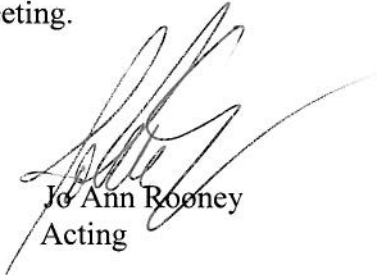
PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

MEMORANDUM FOR VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY  
VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE  
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT MARINE CORPS  
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY  
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY  
CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE  
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS  
COMMANDER, MARINE CORPS RESERVE  
DIRECTOR, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

SUBJECT: Military Family Readiness Council Meeting Minutes, December 12, 2011

Please accept my sincere thanks for your participation during the December 12, 2011 Military Family Readiness Council meeting. Whether you personally attended or sent a representative, the discussion successfully set the conditions for our next meeting to be held during the February/March timeframe.

I have enclosed the minutes of the December 12, 2011 meeting and encourage you to review these in preparation for our next meeting.



Jo Ann Rooney  
Acting

Attachment:  
As stated

**Military Family Readiness Council Meeting Minutes**  
**The Pentagon Conference Center, Room B6**  
**December 12, 2011**  
**1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Council members present:**

Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, Chair  
GEN Peter Chiarelli, USA  
ADM Mark Ferguson, USN  
Gen Philip M. Breedlove, USAF  
CMSAF James Roy, USAF (Via Telephone)  
LTG William Ingram, USA National Guard  
Ms. Kelly Hruska, National Military Family Association (NMFA)  
Ms. Bonnie Carroll, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

**Personnel representing Council members:**

LtGen Robert Milstead representing Gen Joseph Dunford, USMC  
Ms. Tracy McLaughlin representing LtGen Steven Hummer, USMC Reserves  
SgtMaj Joseph Davenport representing SgtMajMC Michael Barrett, USMC  
SGM Tracey Anbiya representing SMA Raymond F Chandler, USA  
CMDCM Scott Fleming representing MCPON Rick West, USN

**Staff of Military Community & Family Policy present:**

Mr. Robert L. Gordon III, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy  
Mr. Charles Milam, Principal Director, Military Community & Family Policy  
Ms. Barbara Thompson, Director, Family Policy, Children & Youth  
Dr. Rebecca Posante, Director, Community Support for Families with Special Needs  
CDR Chris Davis, Designated Federal Officer

**Advisors present:**

Mr. John Campbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy)  
MG Gary Patton, Principal Director, Military Personnel Policy  
BG Colleen McGuire, Director, J1, Joint Staff  
Mr. Ronald Young, Director, Family & Employer Programs & Policy, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs)  
CAPT Michael Colston, Office of Assistant Secretary Of Defense (Health Affairs)  
Mr. Alex Baird, Director, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), Individual and Family Support Policy  
Ms. Donna Brown, Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy)  
Mr. James Lamback, National Guard Bureau

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

## **1. Welcome, Council Membership, Meeting Guidance, and Council Requirements.**

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair, Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness). CDR Chris Davis, Designated Federal Officer (DFO), reviewed rules and regulations governing Federal Advisory Committees.

Dr. Rooney's opening remarks included that this meeting had three primary objectives:

- a. To review and reaffirm the Council's focus areas.
- b. To discuss some upcoming changes to the Council membership that may result from the NDAA 2012.
- c. To discuss the way ahead for the Council that will improve the Council's ability to meet its evaluation and assessment role.

She also introduced the briefings provided to the Council on the Department's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and the Penn State Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness, a new initiative that the Office of Military Community and Family Policy has undertaken with Penn State University.

CDR Davis, DFO, reviewed Council meeting guidance and requirements: only appointed Council Members could vote, and all votes required a motion; designated advisors were authorized to share facts or opinions if called upon by the Council; no public statements were received to be presented to the Council; Council members were informed they must include the Chair and DFO on all communications regarding the Council's deliberations.

## **2. Focus Area Review.**

Dr. Rooney started by reviewing the purpose/ objectives of the Council:

- a. Review and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense regarding DoD military family readiness policy and plans;
- b. Monitor requirements for the support of military family readiness by the Department of Defense; and
- c. Evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the military family readiness programs and activities of the Department of Defense.

The Council then reviewed the focus areas selected at the December 2010 meeting of the Military Family Readiness Council. The focus areas reviewed were:

- a. Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff's IPT Issues (Spouse employment and empowerment, Educational development and excellence, Childcare, Healthcare, and Strategic Communication);
- b. Boots on the Ground (BOG)/Dwell Time;
- c. Disability Evaluation System (DES); and
- d. Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

It was discussed that the DES was being reviewed by the Recovering Warrior Task Force, and there was no update on BOG/Dwell time analysis. CDR Davis gave an update on the decision from the last meeting to subsume the Advisory Panel on Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs which was created in National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2011. During discussion with the DoD Office of General Counsel and the Committee

Management Officer, it was determined that the two advisory committees have competing statutes. Therefore, the MFRC could not subsume the Advisory Panel on Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs without a legislative change. With the creation of a separate advisory council that looks specifically at special needs issues and the potential inclusion of the Director of the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs as a member of the MFRC in NDAA 2012, CDR Davis recommended that Exceptional Family Member Programs be removed as an MFRC focus area. Mrs. Hruska responded that this Council represents all military families, EFMP families included. She and her association have no objection as long as there is a mechanism to keep the Council updated. CMDCM Fleming added that the updates and communication with the Advisory Panel on Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs would need to be two-way so that the MFRC could get updates and give feedback. CDR Davis confirmed that the Council would be able to accomplish that through the potential addition to the Council membership of the Director of the Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs in NDAA 2012.

### **3. Council Briefings.**

The Council received two presentations: Penn State's Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (CMFR) by Dr. Daniel F. Perkins and the Exceptional Family Member Program by Dr. Rebecca Posante from Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy.

#### **a. CMFR.**

- 1) The goal of the CMFR is to improve the well-being and readiness of military families. It also seeks to foster professionals' use of effective and efficient programs to achieve better outcomes for military families.
- 2) The CMFR was developed several months ago to allow professionals supporting military families to come together to share information and find solutions.
- 3) It uses evidence-based analysis to determine effectiveness of programs.
- 4) Output is via a website to help professionals find what they need to make decisions, or via web chat or a phone call to a person.
- 5) Program vetting is very rigorous and may take anywhere from a week to several weeks dependent on the amount of data and literature available.
- 6) Programs are placed on a continuum based on their level of effectiveness. The program's position on the continuum shows how much confidence the CMFR has based on the evidence available. The continuum consists of ineffective programs (analysis shows that the program is not effective), unclear programs (some evidence exists but not very rigorous, or no effectiveness data exists), promising programs (data indicate that the program is moving in the right direction based on the evidence), and effective programs (these programs/practices have been rigorously evaluated and consistently shown to work).
- 7) 110 programs have been vetted and 80 fact sheets done so far and are posted on the website ([www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu](http://www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu)).
- 8) Questions and comments:

- a) Where does the data come from? Answer: Some programs have rating systems already. For those programs or practices that don't have a rating system, Penn State has an excellent rating system that they use.
  - b) Is the audience of the CMFR the program managers or the program users? Answer: The program managers. The public can access the website and see the information and the Clearinghouse welcomes them to engage in discussion and dialogue about the programs, but the sharing of practices and evaluation data is for the military family support professionals.
  - c) Evidence-based is a medical term. Is Penn State trying to apply this set of medical rules? Answer: Yes, the Clearinghouse is moving toward that. They want to use the most rigorous standards to evaluate programs but are aware that in some cases they can't use the same rigor that the medical community uses. The Clearinghouse wants to move toward using better scientific methods if possible and will work with program managers to lay out an evaluation plan for their program.
  - d) Is there an appeal process for a program deemed ineffective? Answer: If a program is in the ineffective category, that program manager would need to make Penn State aware of any new data that show effectiveness.
- b. Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).
- 1) Families need more than just medical help and education; they also need family support. Dr. Posante stressed that the DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs is here to help them in a more comprehensive way, linking them to needed resources.
  - 2) She also stated that there could be up to 350K members of military families with special needs; special needs include a wide range of disabilities and severities.
  - 3) Until 2010, DoD had no policy requiring family support; just assignment policy. The Marine Corps and Army have been providing family support to Exceptional Family Members for over 20 years.
  - 4) Congress initially wanted to set up an office to help families with a member who had autism. Congress was convinced to open the intended office to all those with special needs, not just autism.
  - 5) The DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs helps families through support processes: What does the law say and mean? What are the special needs family's rights? They help special needs families put together a plan for support. Local providers tell the families if required support is available. DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs will help in cases when stabilization is needed.
  - 6) DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs is working with Cornell University to determine the key metrics that will help them know if the DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs is meeting their goals to help families find needed resources. Waiting lists for resources can be years long. They have asked Cornell to find out how many military families are on these lists and



how many are getting services. They are also looking at medical and family support data points for matching the two support systems to make referrals more seamless ... a network of system or a new system that moves families back and forth between medical and social support.

- 7) DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs has several outreach efforts: MilitaryHOMEFRONT website, newsletter (The Exceptional Advocate), consultants and resource materials through Military OneSource, publications, podcasts, and training and education aimed at family members and service providers.
- 8) Questions and comments:
  - a) **Question:** Please clarify, is EFMP separate from family support?  
**Answer:** What is meant by family support is information and referral; the DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs is not reproducing existing programs and services. They try to educate the families about how to access available support. For families who need more than information and referral, they help them put together a plan for accessing assistance. The DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs does not provide medical case management, but helps families with members who have special needs navigate the non-medical side of assistance services.
  - b) **Question:** Should Services be reevaluating assignment policies for balance of service vs. stability? Individuals are individuals; severity must be considered. Levels of special needs must be considered and they have to drive assignment decisions. The military lifestyle, for some families, is not conducive to the services needed for their special needs person.  
**Answer:** EFMP works if the families are enrolled. The service members worry that EFMP will hurt their career. The Marine Corps conducted a study that shows that it doesn't hurt their career. Approximately 90% of the service members with a special needs family member enrolled in the program go to their first choice of duty location. EFMP is not a punitive system, but there are going to be situations where a family is not going to be sent to places that don't provide the services required by the family member with special needs.
  - c) **Question:** DOD civilian populations overseas with family members with special needs would like to have EFMP services. The commands struggle because the civilian employees do not always give the gaining command the prior notification that they would receive with a military member.  
**Answer:** Restrictions resulting from civilian personnel laws are an issue. Families are advised, including civilian employees, regarding available services. The DoD Office of Community Support for Families with Special Needs are only allowed to encourage DoD civilians to enroll voluntarily in the EFMP. They cannot put pressure on DoD civilians to enroll. Dr Posante admitted that they need to do a better job on outreach to the DoD civilians.

#### **4. Proposed Council Membership Changes**

A discussion was held on proposed changes to the makeup of the Military Family Readiness Council. CDR Davis started by briefing some of the changes that may come about with the enactment into law of the NDAA 2012. He briefed the House and Senate versions of approved legislation and pointed out the differences between them. The key changes in both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA 2012 were:

- a. The Chair may choose a representative to chair the meeting if he or she is unable to attend.
- b. One spouse or parent of a member of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force will be added to the Council as members. Two of these will represent the active component, and two will represent the reserve component.
- c. The Director of the Office of Community Support to Families with Special Needs will become a member of the Council.

There were some additional changes in the Senate version. The most significant among these were:

- a. The representatives of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force may be a uniformed service member, a spouse, or a parent of a uniformed service member. These would reflect both active and reserve components. There would no longer be a separate Reserve Component member.
- b. The member representing the Army National Guard or Air National Guard could also be represented by a spouse or parent of a member of the Guard.
- c. The Senior Enlisted Advisors of the Services or a spouse of a senior enlisted member from each Service may be members.

Because these bills were different the Council will have to wait for the revision of the NDAA 2012 report becomes the law to determine the final makeup of the Council. CDR Davis also proposed some changes to the members assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

The Council discussed some options that CDR Davis presented to determine the right level of representation for the uniformed Services on the Council. The first option was reducing the level of representation from the Vice Chiefs of the Services to the 3-stars who are responsible for the family program portfolio for each Service. The other option was to have the Services choose their representative from varying ranks to be members. CDR Davis pointed out that the member should have experience with family issues of all ranks so the first option made more sense. Gen Breedlove mentioned that he agreed it should be his A1 (3-star Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services). Gen Chiarelli recommended that this discussion be tabled until the NDAA 2012 is finalized. Upon closing, CDR Davis mentioned that the selection for the spouse or parent positions would be accomplished by a nominative process through the Services.

#### **5. Council Votes**

Due to the time constraints the Chair decided to proceed to the votes prior to the discussion of the way ahead. Two items were brought up for vote:

- a. Changes to the Council focus areas: The vote was unanimous to keep the focus areas as written (as indicated in Section 2 of this document).

- b. To concur on the change of Secretary of Defense-assigned members that represent the uniformed services: The vote was unanimous to table this until the NDAA 2012 is enacted.

**6. Council's Process for Evaluating and Assessing Family Programs**

CDR Davis briefed the following way ahead to conduct the evaluation and assessment role of the Council. He also said that as the Council develops its assessment and evaluation role it will enable the Council to accomplish the other two mandated purposes to review military family readiness policy and plans and monitor requirements for the support of military family readiness.

The proposed way ahead is:

- a. Compile an inventory of current DoD and Service programs that target the Council's focus areas.
- b. Review evaluation/assessment results of identified programs.
- c. For programs without existing or sufficient evaluation/assessment plans, facilitate development of such plans by leveraging existing DoD-wide initiatives to build evaluation plans.
- d. Based on the review recommend future priorities and plans for improving the readiness of military families.

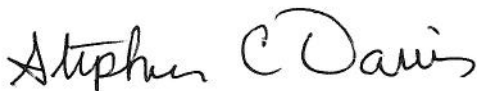
CDR Davis also stressed that the formulation of the list of programs would be complete prior to the next meeting.

**7. Meeting Conclusion:**

After an announcement that the next meeting is planned for February/March 2012, Dr. Rooney adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

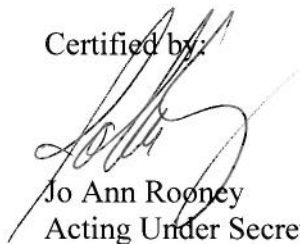
I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Submitted by:



Stephen C. Davis  
Commander, United States Navy  
DFO, Military Family Readiness Council

Certified by:



Jo Ann Rooney  
Acting Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)  
Chair, Military Family Readiness Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.