

MINUTES

Oregon Veterans' Services Task Force **Reintegration Subcommittee**

Date: Thursday, May 1, 2008

Place: Room 200, Oregon Military Department

Convened at 4:27 p.m.

Attendees: Barry Vertner, Scoot McCrae, Martha Schrader, Jack Heims, Mike Burton, Frank Van Meter, Eric Martz, Ann Gooding, Tom Mann, and Robin Steckley

Chair Mike Burton began the meeting with identifying the common theme of “Gain and Retain” and the need to get some of the issues that we have down on paper with some specifics. Identifying the key to communication, and identifying the gaps and why things are not working. Today if we could focus on what key elements we have identified, propose ideas and begin to determine if there needs to be a request for dollars to any of these.

Ann Gooding stated that though the identification of needing better communication with the troops during the 36 month timeframe and prior has been made by the group there needs to be the balance of ensuring the support, programs, services etc. are actually there and in existence.

Martha Schrader brought up that she has gotten this question a lot from the returning troops stating that the information needs to come from the Unit Commander, and she would like some clarification on what this means. This led to a discussion with the following key points coming out:

- The structure of the National Guard is for information and orders come to the Units from their Unit Commanders or First Lieutenants.
- Their needs to be a culture created among the higher levels (generals etc.) to ensure that information about services and programs is provided regularly.
- Relationship with the higher levels should begin at the time of planning of a deployment, perhaps local county veterans service officers (CVSOs) could be attached to local units.
- The idea of the embedded veteran service officer could be very beneficial even for the families while the troops are deployed.
- Need to inform and educate employers of outreach options.
- Reintegration Team is trying new pre-deployment job/information fairs and hoping to increase contact with family.
- Prepare and not repair point of view.

Another point was brought up about once NG troops are demobilized they are returned to a Title 32 status from a Title 10 and this changes the process for accessing healthcare and they are released to go home immediately. A discussion about this issue ensued and highlights included –

- Once they are released (for at least 60 to 90 days) they are not in touch with their Units or Unit Commanders.
- Within 3 to 4 days from leaving Iraq and living on an adrenaline high with constant structure they are back home and living in an unstructured environment.
- Many do not want to file a claim for an injury or condition because it means they are held up longer (up to a week or more) while the others get to go home.
- Why can't there be an extension of the time they remain as Title 10 and assigned to their Units? Is money an issue?
- This extension with some access to family, could be used to help them transition and to share information.
- Information on the demobilization process for the federal active duty returning troops needs to be provided and considered in these scenarios as well.

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.