



## **National Commission on the Future of the Army**

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000  
Arlington, VA 22202

**SUBJECT:** National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit Fort Indiantown Gap (FITG), Pennsylvania

**Date:** 08 September 2015

**Time:** 0830 – 1500 hours

**Locations:** FITG facilities: Army Aviation Support Facility #1 (AASF) Muir Army Airfield, Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (EAATS), Unit Equipment Training Site (UTES), and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Facility

**Format:** facility tours, briefings, and small group discussion

**Attendees:**

GEN (R) Carter Ham, NCFA Commissioner  
Mr. Don Tison, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)  
Mr. Rickey Smith, NCFA Staff Director  
COL Richard Miller NCFA Staff  
LTC Greg Hartvigsen NCFA Staff  
Mr. Scott Sharpe NCFA Staff  
Mr. Eric Melton NCFA Staff

PAARNG accompanying the NCFA personnel during site visit:  
MG James Joseph, The Adjutant General, PA National Guard  
MG John Gronski, Commander, 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, PAARNG  
BG Timothy Hilty, Assistant Adjutant General – Army, PAARNG  
COL Mark Schindler, Chief of Staff, Joint Force Headquarters, PAARNG  
COL David Wood, Chief of Staff, 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, PAARNG

**Documents Submitted to Commission:**

1. 28th Infantry Division Briefing, September 8, 2015
2. Briefing by CW4 Ronald Magaro at the Unit Training Equipment Site (UTES), September 8, 2015
3. Briefing from CW5 Dave Behm on the Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (TUAS) Operations Facility (TUASOF), September 8, 2015
4. Fact Sheet, Pennsylvania National Guard, September 8, 2015
5. Fact Sheets for Unit Training Equipment Site (UTES) and Muir Army Airfield (AASF #1), September 8, 2015
6. Fort Indiantown Gap Warrior Training Grounds Post Guide and Training Catalogue 2015, September 8, 2015

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7. NCFA Tour Agenda for the Site Visit to the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, September 8, 2015
8. Pamphlet for the Counter Improvised Explosive Device Integration Cell (CI2C), September 8, 2015
9. Pamphlet on the 3rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (3rdWMD-CST), September 8, 2015
10. Pamphlet on the Eastern Army National Guard Training Site (EAATS) at Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA, September 8, 2015
11. Pamphlet on the Future Virtual Battlespace 3 (VBS3), September 8, 2015
12. Pamphlet on the History of the 28th Infantry Division, September 8, 2015
13. Pamphlet from the Medical Battalion Training Site (MBTS), September 8, 2015
14. Pamphlet on the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center (NCTC), September 8, 2015
15. Summary of the NCFA Tour of the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (EAATS), September 8, 2015

### **Meeting Summaries**

At 0830 hours, MG Joseph, MG Gronski, BG Hilty, and LTC Robert Hepner, Garrison Commander, FTIG, met Commissioner Ham and NCFA staff at the Harrisburg International Airport. The group traveled by UH-60 aircraft to FTIG. Before landing at FTIG at 0930, LTC Hepner provided an aerial tour of FTIG ranges, training sites, and support facilities.

Upon landing at Muir Army Airfield at 0930 hours, the group moved to the Army Aviation Support Facility #1 (AASF) and were met by MAJ Kenneth Smith, Supervisory Instructor Pilot/Operations Officer, AASF. The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to this site visit and the information gathered.

MAJ Smith gave a brief orientation about the support the AASF provides to units of the 28<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) and the Eastern Army Aviation Training Site (EAATS). This included the Flying Hour Plan, number of aircraft and aircrew members trained and the use of Additional Flight Training Periods (AFTP) for flight training and certifications for aviators and non-rated crew members.

Next, the group met with MAJ George Giles, Maintenance Officer, AASF. MAJ Giles provided an overview of the maintenance support the AASF provides to units and EAATS. This information included the airframes supported, type and level of aviation maintenance (unit, intermediate, and depot levels), how AFTPs are used in aviation maintenance, and how the AASF activities integrate into the overall Army maintenance system.

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The group moved to the maintenance area where CW5 Wendell Smith, AH-64D Standardization Instructor Pilot, AASF, gave a capabilities brief of the AH-64D Apache, how aviators and units are employed for air-to-ground integration training with Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), and with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the Manned and Un-manned Teaming (MUM-T). He answered questions about process for former Regular Army pilots to transition to ARNG and how recruiting efforts include Active Component (AC) installations.

Next, LTC Richard Cottage, Counter Drug Coordinator, PAARNG, gave an overview and capabilities brief of the LUH-72 Lakota. He discussed training and flight requirements at the unit, state, and local government levels, including counter drug activities and assistance on the US southwest border mission. He discussed aspects of the Flying Hour Program and resources required for maintenance and training. A question was brought up about State only missions for Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA). He stated that State missions provide valuable flight training, which makes the pilots more proficient for combat missions. He indicated that recruiting and retention are good within the unit, but suffer when deployments and support missions at home do not occur or get off-ramped.

At 1010 hours, the group walked from the AASF to the EAATS and met with the following ARNG personnel: LTC Gregg Clark, EAATS Commander; MAJ Phillip Peters, Utility Battalion Commander; CW4 Richard Adams, UH-60 Standardization Instructor Pilot; CPT Nathan Smith, Enlisted Company Commander; SFC Shawn Merrill, Enlisted Flight Instructor and Enlisted Maintenance NCO. The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to this site visit and the information gathered.

EAATS command, staff and instructors, provided an introduction to the EAATS. They also provided background, qualifications, and experience for the staff and instructors, as well as the type of courses taught. EAATS hosts students from all three Army components. EAATS is also the largest RC aviation simulation site and second only in size to Ft. Rucker. They discussed the use of simulation based training for International Military Students (IMS) and provided a table with international student load for EAATS. The biggest simulation issue discussed was lack of a UH-60 Transportable Black Hawk Operation Simulator (TBOS) or Black Hawk Battlestaff Training Simulator (BaTS).

They informed Commissioner Ham that EAATS has the capacity for a TBOS or BaTS and highlighted the fact that their ability to instruct UH-60M pilot training would be improved by either of these simulators. They explained that a TBOS had been removed from EAATS and sent to another location. They discussed the backlog for UH-60M training at Ft. Rucker and highlighted that the Army would no longer have a capability to produce UH-60M Model pilots should Ft. Rucker suffer a natural disaster, a terrorist attack or a pandemic.

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The discussion shifted to standards and certification. They indicated that Ft. Rucker's Directorate of Evaluations and Standards (DES) provides personnel to provide oversight and ensure standardization with all Aviation training.

The EAATS staff then provided a tour of classrooms, flight briefing rooms, flight simulator and maintenance training facilities. They answered questions about the training programs, throughput of students, comparisons to similar schools at AC installations and the scheduling process for AC and RC students.

The group was then taken to the Aviation Maintenance Instructional Building (AMIB). The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to this site visit and the information gathered. LTC Clark and CSM Miller introduced the group to CPT Nathan Smith, Enlisted Training Company Commander, who escorted the group for discussions with instructors and students. Enlisted Training Company personnel discussed the following:

- Nonrated Crewmember Flight / Standardization Instructor Course: SFC Merrill (Enlisted Training Company Flight Platoon SGT) was conducting a block of instruction on the Aircrew Training Program first training day of the course. SFC Merrill fielded the following questions from the panel:
  - 1) SFC Merrill came to EAATS in 2002, boarded as instructor January 2003, and assigned as Senior Instructor in 2004.
  - 2) Where do students struggle the most in the course? Systems I and II
  - 3) How does the field do with preparing students? Some units do better than others. EAATS sends a detailed welcome letter and provides source documents as study guides to all attendees.
  - 4) What is the mix of AC/RC in the current class? Five of six are RC.
  - 5) How many seats were available for the current class? Six. 12<sup>th</sup> Aviation (AC unit at Ft. Belvoir) was offered a seat on short notice when a student was not able to attend. This filled all available slots.
  - 6) What is the graduation rate in this course? 80-85%
  - 7) Students were asked about notification for course attendance and their personal deployment history. Answers ranged from 3 months to 2 weeks notification except for the AC Soldier who attended with 12 hours' notice. Deployment history was 2 Soldiers with 2 combat tours, 2 Soldiers with 1 combat tour, and 2 Soldiers with no combat tours.
  - 8) What are student criteria to attend the course? Battalion Commander Letter of recommendation, night vision device qualified, assigned to rated position crew position, current flight physical, pay grade E4 - E7 with minimum 1 year as a UH-60 Crewmember.
  - 9) How many course quotas for the FY 15 training year? 48.
  - 10) Who manages unused ARNG quotas? Unused quotas are opened 30 days before the classes to allow USAR and Regular Army to fill seats as needed.

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EAATS routinely trains Regular Army Soldiers. EAATS filled 75% of seats in all classes for the year despite having a 43% funding rate.

11) What improvements are planned? CH-47F model training will improve with the inbound enhanced video training devices.

- UH-60 A/L Helicopter Repairer Transition Course: SSG McAndrew was in the middle of the Main Rotor block of instruction. What are student expectations for the course, quality of accommodations and chow, and length of training? SPC Smith said that he really enjoyed the training and that the accommodations were adequate. SSG Bermudez Bermudez agreed with Smith.
- UH-60 Fuel Cell Mock-up and the Rotor Brake Trainer: 1SG Ayala directed the group's attention to the development of training aids and introduced Mr. Dennis Gibson (S3 Inc.) who provided some background on the development of the trainers. He noted his 40 years of maintenance experience in the ARNG and an additional 5 as a contractor with S3 Inc. working at EAATS. His ability to develop the training device in-house saved \$30,000 compared to a parts quote provided by Ft. Eustis.

At 1105 hours, the group moved by bus to UTES. The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to this site visit and the information gathered. CW4 Magaro led a walking tour around the maintenance facility.

CW4 Magaro noted facility services a wide range of vehicles and equipment (e.g. Strykers, howitzers, calibration items, etc.). He highlighted their use of civilian based tools and procedures that provide significant return on investment. For example, a \$10,000 kit for aligning wheels was funded by savings in reduced tire wear that led to purchasing fewer tires.

COL McCormack from the Regional Training Institute (RTI) located at FITG joined the group for a brief discussion during the UTES tour. He noted that the wide variety of equipment on hand at UTES allows for all 11, 13, and 19 series military skill occupation NCO courses at the RTI. One-third of the students at the RTI come from the AC, mostly from nearby Fort Drum.

At 1200 hours, the group moved to a lunch area where MG Gronski provided the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division overview brief during the meal. After reviewing details about 28<sup>th</sup> ID units (size, location, manning, etc.), the discussion turned to training and deployment cycles. MG Gronski noted the need for combat arms formations to cycle through a Combat Training Center (CTC) as part of a five or six year cycle. This drives the need for additional training days as part of ramp up to CTC rotation. In parallel, the Division needs to conduct a Warfighter Mission Command Training Program event on a similar cycle.

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Commissioner Ham, MG Joseph, and MG Gronski then discussed the lack of employment for ARNG Divisions since 2011. No consensus was reached as to why, but the group concluded that ARNG Divisions provided unused capacity for the Army at present.

On the topic of sufficient funds for leader development (e.g. professional military education courses) and leaders attending collective training (e.g. annual training), MG Joseph explained the funds were not always sufficient for both. He directed education as part of promotion advancement as the higher priority.

The discussion then turned to the relationship and effectiveness of First Army in their training support role. MG Gronski noted First Army had changed their focus to better support training. He noted improvements in integrating Observer/Coach/Trainers into unit events. He also explained that First Army involved with units before arriving at mobilization sites paid dividends by reducing redundant training after mobilization.

As this meeting ended, the topic of Full Time Support (FTS) was discussed. MG Gronski noted the Division had 15% of their force as FTS. While no one had a specific method for correlating FTS manning to readiness, the idea of comparing MOS qualifications, property accountability, and training statistics before 2000 at much lower FTS manning levels with current data was offered as one indicator of FTS effectiveness.

The group was taken to the Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (TUAS) Operations Facility (TUASOF) at 1300 hours. CW5 Dave Behm, TUASOF Commander, greeted Commissioner Ham and members of the group. Others present were WO1 Tyler Smith, UAS Operator; WO1 Robert Reed, UAS Operator; SFC Robert Frey, UAS Facility NCOIC, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Facility. The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to this site visit and the information gathered.

A brief introduction was provided and the facility tour was turned over to SFC Frey. He provided an orientation on the equipment and capabilities of the Shadow UAS. The UAS team provided information on maintenance, training and support of the BCTs who owned equipment. SFC Frey addressed the group by providing a brief overview of maintenance requirements and an overview of the two variants of aircraft and payloads

All maintenance is conducted in accordance with the same policies and procedures as manned aviation but with a nine-Soldier section. Five full-time maintainers support three BCTs with total of nine aircraft and supporting components. Soldiers perform PMCS during drill periods to further sustain readiness. As they conduct PMCS, the Soldiers learn more about their equipment. This also improves team cohesion and proficiency. TUASOF submits monthly readiness reports for the two variants of aircraft on hand: standard Shadow 200 and the increased endurance Shadow aircraft. Some of these aircraft

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The group moved onto the flight line where Commissioner Ham asked questions regarding training in garrison, tactical training, airspace management, and BCT involvement.

All three BCT UAS platoons were consolidated within the facility for more effective resource management and training. BCTs are not absolved of responsibility, but are able to better provide support through more effective management of resource intensive requirements.

Units conduct tactical concurrent/collective training by taking UAS platoons to other AT locations such as Ft. Knox, Camp Grayling, and Camp Atterbury. FTIG is currently working on a tactical strip within the local restricted airspace. They have been operating under a FAA Certificate of Authorization/Waiver (COA) for ten years to fly in the Class D airspace. They currently conduct joint/concurrent training with Air Force Joint Tactical Air Controllers, A-10 aircraft, F-16 aircraft, manned rotary wing aircraft, units conducting convoy training lanes, and other units training on post that request UAS support.

WO1 Reed and WO1 Smith took the group to Ground Control Stations. Discussion centered on the ability of M-Day<sup>i</sup> Soldiers to come in and train based on their availability. The full-time facility staff makes it possible for all Soldiers to schedule around work and school requirements to come in for training on the system using additional flight training periods (AFTPs). SFC Frey pointed out that the UAS Flight hours OPTEMPO at FTIG exceeds some AC institutions that have more UAS<sup>ii</sup>.

Appropriate levels of full time staffing allow M-Day Soldiers to meet and sustain the same requirements as active duty Soldiers. There is no training standard difference between Army components. Personnel in leadership positions devote time outside of inactive duty training<sup>iii</sup> weekends to plan training in a way to maximize meeting numerous requirements and achieving training objectives.

Based on a question, MG Joseph explained the restrictions for using Army UAS for domestic operations. UAS employment for domestic operations is addressed in DoD Policy Memo 15-002, Guidance for Domestic Use of UAS.

Commissioner Ham entered the Ground Control Station shelter to observe training. SGT Allen Capps, Instructor Operator, noted that he typically flies 20-30 hours per month while training other Soldiers on various tasks, techniques, and skills.

The group moved back to Muir Army Airfield by bus at 1355 hours. Along the route LTC Hepner described different facilities. Before departing FITG by UH-60 aircraft, a small group discussion was held at AASF with Commissioner Ham, Mr. Tison, Mr. R. Smith, MG Joseph, MG Gronski, and CSM Gundrum.

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The DFO explained how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applied to the meeting. The first topic discussed was the Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) fiscal logic and operational aspects of the National Guard Bureau's counter proposal. This led to discussion on how to improve communication between senior Army leadership and the Adjutants General.

The round table discussion ended on the topic of ARNG recruiting and retention. PAARNG success in both areas linked to realistic training and employing Soldiers on missions. All Soldiers are dedicated and desire action in their units.

The meeting adjourned at 1450 hours for the flight back to Harrisburg International Airport as the end of the NCFA activities.

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<sup>i</sup> M-day is a traditional Reserve Component Soldier serving one weekend per month and two weeks per year.

<sup>ii</sup> PM UAS provided a spreadsheet that shows the hours reported for Ft. Drum, Ft. Bliss, Ft. Hood, Fort Benning, Ft. Campbell, and Joint Base Lewis McCord. FTIG was within 100 hours of Ft. Campbell with ~680 and exceeded the flight OPTEMPO of the other referenced installations.

<sup>iii</sup> Authorized training performed by a member of a Reserve Component not on active duty or active duty for training and consisting of regularly scheduled unit training assemblies, additional training assemblies, periods of appropriate duty or equivalent training, and any special additional duties authorized for Reserve Component personnel by the Secretary concerned, and performed by them in connection with the prescribed activities of the organization in which they are assigned with or without pay.