



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, Minnesota

Date: 26 August 2015

Time: 0800 – 1630 CSTF

Locations: Minneapolis, Minnesota (MN); Rosemount MN; Camp Ripley MN

Format: Briefings and round table discussions

Attendees:

- GEN (R) Carter Ham, NCFA Chairman
- MG (R) Raymond Carpenter, NCFA Executive Director
- LTC Michael Lockwood, Assistant Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)
- LTC Barry Vincent, NCFA Staff
- Mr. Anthony Boyda, NCFA Staff
- Mr. Greg Johnson, NCFA Staff
- Mr. Scott Sharp, NCFA Staff
- Governor Mark Dayton, Minnesota
- MG Richard Nash, Adjutant General, Minnesota National Guard (MNNG)
- MG Courtney Carr, Adjutant General, Indiana National Guard (INNG)
- MG Sprynczynatyk, Adjutant General, North Dakota National Guard (NDNG)
- MG Timothy Reisch, Adjutant General, South Dakota National Guard (SDNG)
- Maj Gen Donald Dunbar, Adjutant General, Wisconsin National Guard (WING)
- BG Richard Hayes, Adjutant General, Illinois National Guard (ILNG)
- MG Neal Loidolt, 34th Infantry Division (ID) Commander, MN Army National Guard
- MG Brian Harris, Task Force 51 Commander, US Army North (ARNORTH)
- BG Jonathon McColum, 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) Commander, US Army Reserve (USAR)
- COL John Rosnow, 644th RSC Commander and MN Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPLO)
- COL Kevin Olson, Public Affairs Officer, MN Army National Guard
- COL Scott St. Sauver, Camp Ripley Commander, MN Army National Guard
- COL Manke, 34th CAB Commander, MN Army National Guard
- LTC Merricks, 34th CAB Executive Officer, MN Army National Guard
- LTC Jess Ulrick, Secretary to the General Staff, MN Army National Guard
- MAJ Dotterer, CERF-P Commander, MN Army National Guard
- Private Vaughn Austin, CERF-P Member, MN Army National Guard
- Mr. Ed Dankbar, Hazmat Officer, Canadian Pacific Rail Emergency Response

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

- Mr. Clem Schimikowski, Hazmat Officer, Canadian Pacific Rail Emergency Response
- Mr. Uli Seal, Task Force 1 Commander, Bloomington, MN Fire Chief
- Mr. Scott Vadnais, Task Force 1, Edna, MN Fire Department
- Mr. Mike Pott, Task Force 1, South Metro Twin Cities, MN Fire Department
- Mr. Ron Crosby, Systems and Scheduling Chief, Camp Ripley, MN Garrison

Documents Submitted to Commission:

1. BG McCollum 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command 26 AUG 15 Briefing
2. Camp Ripley Training Center Capabilities Brief
3. COL John Rosnow Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer Information Brief
4. COL Litynski Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer Overview
5. MG Courtney Carr AG INNG 26 AUG 15 Testimony statement
6. MG David Sprynczynatyk AG NDNG 26 AUG 15 Testimony statement
7. MG Richard Hayes AG ILNG 26 AUG 15 Testimony statement
8. MG Richard Hayes AG ILNG Enclosure 2 – ILNG Deployments and Exercises
9. MG Richard Hayes AG ILNG Enclosure 3 – JFQ April 2015 DoD Stafford Act
10. MG Richard Hayes AG ILNG Enclosure 4 – USAWC Unit 6 HS HD and DSCA-Content
11. MG Richard Nash AG MNNG 26 AUG 15 Testimony statement
12. MG Tim Reisch AG SDNG 26 AUG 15 Testimony statement
13. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, 55th Civil Support Team
14. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP)
15. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Dual Status Command
16. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Exercise Fact Sheet
17. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Joint Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (JRSOI)
18. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Minnesota Joint Operations Center
19. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Minnesota National Guard Major Commands
20. Vigilant Guard 2015 Fact Sheet, Participating Agencies

Meetings

NCFA meetings began at Minnesota Joint Forces Headquarters at 0800hrs. After introductions, the session opened with a news clip that had aired on Minnesota local news of the Vigilant Guard exercise taking place in Minnesota. Several aspects of the exercise were highlighted in the news clip: number of organizations involved, simulated searches and rescue operations, detection, identification, and containment of spilled chemicals, large scale medical treatment, and the airlift of trailer-mounted firefighting equipment by an Army National Guard CH-47 helicopter.

Commissioner Ham and ADFO discussed the purpose and composition of the Commission and the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) to the

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

discussions for the day. NCFA personnel were joined by Governor Mark Dayton, MG Nash (TAG MNNG), and other members of the Minnesota Army National Guard.

MG Nash discussed the new state funded \$3M rail safety training site at Camp Ripley. Minnesota is a transit way for rail movement of hazardous material posing an immediate threat to civilian and environmental safety. The training site enables the State to be prepared should a hazardous rail or pipeline spill event take place.

MG Nash then explained how the site was incorporated into the Vigilant Guard Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) exercise. Organizations taking part in Vigilant Guard included the US Coast Guard, Wisconsin National Guard, Ohio National Guard, Virginia National Guard, Minnesota National Guard, Red Cross, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Canadian Pacific Rail Road, several city fire departments, NORTHCOM, ARNORTH, and USAR. He noted over 560 civilians were participating. Only four states get to host Vigilant Guard Exercises each year. Minnesota officials have planned this exercise over the past four years. This exercise is funded through a combination of funds from National Guard Bureau and NORTHCOM.

Governor Dayton noted the importance of this training. Commissioner Ham highlighted the sophistication of this type of exercise is extremely relevant and valuable as geared toward real world disasters.

Commissioner Ham noted threats are increasing, including and especially, threats to the homeland. This type of exercise (Vigilant Guard) is very important to preparedness as our enemies desire to inflict damage and casualties here at home. First responders are crucial, and so too is their ability to be enabled by military forces when necessary. There is a growing requirement for the response in the homeland.

MG Nash remarked that a very real threat is a cyber-war, and although it was not part of the Vigilant Guard scenario, State organizations are working on cyber defense and cyber response. Commissioner Ham remarked that cyber is a growth area and the Army is challenged to grow this capability within budget.

Governor Dayton explained the Council of Governors interaction with DOD. The Governors want to be a partner to DOD, but feel the Apache issue (structure, funding and capability) is an acid test for that partnership.

The discussion shifted to how the Budget Control Act (BCA) contributed to fiscal challenges. Soldiers, NCOs, and officers from all three components of the Army are being penalized by not getting to attend their professional development schools. The way the BCA was crafted creates winners and losers causing friction and competition. This does not provide proper service to the Nation.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Governor Dayton pointed out that the Nation gets more for our money when we maintain a strong Army National Guard. The ARNG has proven to be an effective force capable of performing the full spectrum of missions.

MG Nash stated that we need to bring all three components of the Army together. The Army had made significant strides toward working together at the tactical level, but we are at risk of losing our way. After thirteen years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we should not go backwards. We are a much better force when we are working in concert.

Governor Dayton then discussed his upcoming appearance before the Commission during an open meeting in September. Likely points he would address include inadequate funding, movement of Apache helicopters under Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), NGB alternative to ARI, and the Council of Governors relationship with DOD.

MG Nash stated that Army and Air Guard retention is strong and that Minnesota is at 118% strength. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is low, but doesn't seem to be hampering recruiting or retention. MNNG leadership has taken an active and very deliberate approach to engaging with employers in an effort to maintain close and consistent support for MNNG Soldiers.

Governor Dayton mentioned that MG Nash has been the driving force behind the Yellow Ribbon program since its inception coordinating with over 270 businesses and communities. Businesses seem to be seeking our service members because of their deployment experience.

Commissioner Ham stated there were two items he took back from his previous visit to Minnesota. One was "Beyond Yellow Ribbon" and the other was the "Veterans Small Business" initiative. Those two efforts stand out as models for other communities.

The meeting ended at 0910 and NCFA personnel moved by ground transport to the 34th ID Headquarters in Rosemount, MN.

NCFA Chairman and staff next met with the following Adjutants General: MG Hayes, IL; MG Carr, IN; MG Nash, MN; Maj Gen Dunbar, WI; MG Reisch, ND; and MG Sprynczynatyk, SD.

Commissioner Ham explained the event as a Commission information gathering site visit to learn more about DSCA and National Guard Civil Support. The ADFO explained relevant aspects of the FACA and the Sunshine Act, and his responsibility to be the liaison between the public, the DOD, and the Commission.

Commissioner Ham noted the Commission is nearing the end of the data collection phase of activities and asked if the Adjutants General had a strategy to overcome the friction between the components within the Army? The Adjutants General observed that

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Air National Guard and the Air Force have been through this. The New Secretary and Chief of the Air Force got ahead of the Air Force Commission report by establishing a Total Force Task Force that began implementing obvious changes that needed to be done before the report was submitted. That action and active outreach from senior Air Force leaders took steam out of report, and went a long way to begin repairing the rift between the components.

An Adjutant General observed that Reserve Component members understand most Active Component systems, processes, and roles, but the reverse is not true. The lack of exposure to, or service within, Reserve Component formations inhibits understanding of the National Guard role as the combat reserve of the Army, and military first responder at home. Someone noted that the friction is at the top levels arguing over resources and not with the juniors. Lower level leaders and Soldiers have shared experience and see Army serving and fighting together.

The next topic discussed was the Sustainable Readiness Model, including the frequency and timing of ARNG Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations. When is the optimal time to integrate with other Army components for training? The Adjutants General observed that CTC rotations at the end of the progressive readiness cycle allows and synchronizes the training prior to entering the available year for possible deployment. The Adjutants General manage their personnel to ensure they are stable prior to CTC attendance and through the available period. This drives how they are currently managing their key leaders.

One Adjutant General expressed concern with the future of the Army's generating force. The generating force is an investment for the Total Army, and as such, cannot be a bill payer. The generating force is the key to producing the Army and is really the basis for strategic flexibility. With a strong generating force, the Army can respond to changing situations. With a weak generating force, the Army will become brittle and unable to flex when the Nation needs that flexibility.

The obstacles to RC utilization were discussed including the inhibitors to committing an ARNG Division Headquarters to support Army requirements. The Adjutants General observed that the challenges are both cultural and fiscal (i.e. limited funds applied to Title 10 § 12304b authority). Should the RC assume all Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) missions? The Adjutants General recommended keeping KFOR and MFO in the RC due to the ad hoc nature of troop requirements and the impact on AC readiness. However, the MFO could rotate between AC and RC allowing units from each to work together and build relationships.

Regional Training Institutes (RTI) utilization was discussed. Illinois FY15 data was offered as an example. The Illinois RTI executed 96% of their courses quota, with a 93% graduation rate and no Active Component Soldiers attended. The real issue to AC utilization is a cultural perception that the RTI training is not equivalent to AC courses. The Adjutants General committed to providing utilization information to the Commission.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

The topic of ARI was discussed in general. Key thoughts included: (1) no ARNG AH-64s means no depth in AH-64s in the Army; and (2) any time a capability is only in a single component that creates brittleness and lack of flexibility in the force. The Adjutants General are open to other options, but a Division without a Combat Aviation Brigade is dissimilar from the AC divisions, and thus limits Army flexibility to manage Army requirements.

The meeting ended at 1110 and the Adjutants General departed the room in preparation for the Commission's next meeting in the same room.

At 1114, Vigilant Guard exercise briefing and discussion began. MG Nash remained in the room and brought in LTC Jess Ulrick, the MNNG Command Group Executive Officer, to present the exercise overview.

The exercise discussion started with LTC Ulrick briefing the slides submitted to the NCFA staff. The training events were modeled on crises that Minnesota had experienced in the past, to include an oil related rail incident and a weather event with high winds and rain as well as potential events requested by first responders improve their preparedness. MNNG partnered with several organizations at the state and local levels of government and local civilian industry for the exercise. About 1,100 people participated in Vigilant Guard 2015.

The exercise briefing ended at 1125. The NCFA personnel took a short break and then went down the hall to the 34th ID Commander's office for the next meeting.

At 1132, Commissioner started the session stating that the Commission is hearing about stress on AC Divisions¹ and asked what MG Loidolt sees as impediments to deploying ARNG Divisions. MG Loidolt responded that it comes down to trust in the assessment of the unit. The Army converted part of the 7th ID, a non-deploying unit, for an Afghanistan mission when they should have used the 34th ID. MG Loidolt explained "we were already assessed as ready."

MG (R) Carpenter asked if the unit could have adjusted to a change in mission in time for Afghanistan mission.² MG Loidolt said they could have adjusted because they had the time. Further, he assessed the unit could have adjusted using their Annual Training (AT) budget with very little additional cost. MG Loidolt noted that the 34th ID still had two months in their available year for their training cycle.

¹ Army Divisions converted to only headquarters under the modular reorganization initiative. Army Divisions no longer have organic brigades.

² 34th ID was scheduled to back fill the 101st Airborne Division for the Ebola zone mission in Africa. That mission ended and no Division was needed for a second rotation.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Commissioner Ham asked about the effect on Soldiers and retention after being off-ramped from the West Africa mission. MG Loidolt stated he had not seen or heard of anyone getting out because of the off-ramp.

Other than for State missions, MG Loidolt explained the Division would be ready again in 4 years since their available year was almost complete. He explained the warfighter mission command exercise is a certifying event for a Division. MG Loidolt pointed out that if he knew before a warfighter exercise that the Division was going to deploy, he could stabilize the personnel in the unit for all the collective training. This would reduce the time required to be ready if given a mission. The unit would only need area specific training to be ready to deploy.

MG (R) Carpenter brought up that LTG McFarland, III Corps Commander, wants to be the validator for all armor Divisions. MG Loidolt said that he wouldn't have a problem with the Corps Commander validating training readiness. However, it would not make good sense for a different Corps Commander to validate training if alignment changed. The Division warfighter is the validating exercise for the Division so the unit should not need a second validation. Skills and training will atrophy, so a year or more after validation would require another validation exercise.

Commissioner Ham noted that the 34th ID has two units that recently completed CTC rotations and asked MG Loidolt what he thought the CTC rotation frequency should be? MG Loidolt said the rotation rate needs to be based on demand. He also thinks the ARNG needs six rotations per year versus the current two.

MG Loidolt explained that the CTC experience begins to become institutionalized within the ARNG when officers and NCOs participate multiple times during their careers in various capacities at a CTC. Allotting six CTC rotations per year to the ARNG would allow each ARNG BCT to attend once every five years. He also noted that the 34th ID may provide a tactical command post as a higher headquarters for an AC brigade at NTC in 2016. Commissioner Ham indicated this will help to break down barriers that cause friction between the components of the Army.

MG Loidolt was asked what the ARI and the Army National Guard alternative to ARI mean to him as the division commander? He explained that if you change the ARNG Divisions to fully implement ARI, he would no longer be able to train like his AC counterparts due to no Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB). If it is critical for AC Divisions to train with attack aviation, then it should also be critical for RC Divisions to train with attack aviation. ARNG Divisions will be viewed as less capable because they haven't practiced integrating attack aviation. If ARI happens, ARNG Divisions will need additional post-mobilization (post-mob) training to learn to fight using Apaches. RC training model becomes significantly different from the AC.

Commissioner Ham noted that the new CSA has started the process of aligning AC and ARNG units. He asked how MG Loidolt liked this partnership program. MG Loidolt

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

stated that it is a hugely effective program. His units gain a lot in leader development. The program provides a peer group for senior commanders and staff to ask questions that they may otherwise have to try to figure out on their own.

The meeting ended at 1158 and NCFA personnel moved to a conference room for the next meeting with NORTHCOM, ARNORTH, and TF-51 personnel participating in Vigilant Guard.

MG Harris, TF-51 Commander, Alabama NG, briefed TF-51 capabilities. TF-51 was using this exercise as a deployment exercise while serving as the Joint Force Land Component Commander (JFLCC) forward element. NORTHCOM Commander employs TF-51 for Title 10 mission command, to support the Dual Status Commander (DSC), coordinate T10 force provision to the DSC, and to work for the Theater Army forward element to set the theater³ and provide a base support installation link to the DSC.

The TF can deploy rapidly in one C-17 and be on the ground in 12-24 hours. The TF can handle two major incidents at the same time depending on scope and has worked on numerous exercises with Canadian and Mexican forces. The TF is part of Fifth Army (ARNORTH) and primarily composed of AC Soldiers, but has several full-time Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) officers working on the staff. MG Harris also discussed the capabilities of some of the Theater Army's enablers, such as 167th Theater Sustainment Command and the assigned Sustainment Brigade.

The NCFA staff asked about the optimal frequency for DSCA exercises. MG Harris said they conduct one exercise per quarter, but he would prefer one per month.

The discussion ended at 1226 and NCFA personnel moved to the south parking lot of the facility to board a UH-60 to fly to Camp Ripley. MG Nash and MAJ Pino, National Guard Bureau traveled with NCFA personnel to Camp Ripley. During the 30-minute flight, COL St. Sauver, briefed the group concerning the Camp Ripley Training Center.

The flight landed at 1300 and was met by MAJ Dotterer, CERF-P Commander, and Mr. Seal, MN TF-1 Command and Bloomington, MN, Fire Department Chief. The group then observed several training events with two combined CERF-Ps (MN & WI) working with MN TF-1. MN TF-1 consists of four separate fire departments and police departments which comprise four State Urban Search and Rescue Teams and one County Special Operations Team. The County Special Operations Team consists of 13 fire and police departments who have designated specific personnel to serve on this special team when the situation warrants their expertise. The group witnessed several simulated emergency extraction efforts.

³ Setting the theater includes actions to establish and maintain the conditions necessary to retain joint force freedom of action. Army forces deployed by NORTHCOM would develop, maintain, and operate the theater structure. Joint forces depend on Army forces to provide essential capabilities including logistics, communications, intelligence, long-range fires, and air and missile defense.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Mr. Vadnais, Edna Fire Department, MN TF-1, briefed the group on various extraction techniques and capabilities. Mr. Pott, South Metro Fire Department, MN TF-1, briefed the group on advanced extraction techniques and on shoring up and entering a heavily damaged building to reach casualties. Mr. Crosby, Garrison Systems and Scheduling Chief, briefed the group on how Camp Ripley hosted this type of advanced emergency response exercise and the various training events.

Private Austin, MN CERF-P, explained why he loved serving in the CERF-P due to the demanding and rewarding nature of the duty.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad "ER CP," which is a Hazardous Material Emergency Response Team demonstrated moving firefighting equipment via helicopter into a remote area. Mr. Danbar and Mr. Schimikowski, ER CP Hazmat Officers, briefed the group on the response team's capabilities. The ER CP is a pilot program in eight states where the ER CP teams work with CERF-Ps in an emergency response.

The group moved via UH-60 from Camp Ripley at 1450 to the 133rd Air National Guard Headquarters near the Minneapolis airport for the final meetings of the day.

First meeting at the airport facility was with 34th CAB. At 1530, Commissioner Ham opened the session by describing the purpose and background of the Commission and the ADFO explained FACA provisions. COL Manke, 34th Commander, and LTC Merricks, 34th CAB XO, led the discussion.

Commissioner Ham explained the NCFA task concerning AH-64 transfer and asked if COL Manke was familiar with the National Guard Bureau counter proposal. COL Manke replied that he was not familiar with the NGB proposal plan. COL Manke stated that removing ARNG Apaches will make replacing that capability very difficult and goes beyond just the air crews. The Aviation Support Battalion will lose expertise in armament and mechanics. Air to ground operations will suffer and ARNG will lose interoperability with the AC.

The question was asked, how long would it be before the Apache pilots on the brigade staff would lose that expertise and what will that mean? COL Manke stated they would be degraded in just a matter of a few years. ARNG would have limited familiarity with Armed Reconnaissance Battalion or Heavy-Armed Reconnaissance Squadron doctrine and be relegated to "something different," and therefore not as useful.

Commissioner Ham asked how reliant are Apache units on crew members and maintainers coming from the AC? COL Manke said he did not have hard data to definitively answer the question. He routinely gains two or three aviators per year from the active Army. This past year one of them was an Apache pilot who will have to re-class to the Blackhawk if ARI is implemented. Another was a Blackhawk pilot from 10th

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Mountain with about 1000 hours of combat time. They are nice additions, but the ARNG is not reliant upon those accessions.

MG (R) Carpenter asked how long it would take for a traditional (non-active) ARNG pilot to become proficient in manned/unmanned teaming. COL Manke did not see this as too complex and would not take long. Aviators across the Army train to the same levels when not deployed and many of the ARNG aviators are more senior to their counterparts on active duty⁴. LTC Merricks responded that he worked with an active attack battalion while deployed that was teamed with an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) platoon. They were working out techniques and tactics how they could work together sort of on the fly. He stated that it is important that the UAS and Apaches work together since the Kiowa helicopters are going away.

COL Manke went on to say that some AC Shadow units have different levels of proficiency just like some RC units are more proficient than others. Some units will pick it up faster and others slower. Warrant Officers operating Shadows in the brigade are very proficient as they prepare for future NTC rotation.

Commissioner Ham asked LTC Merricks to talk about his recent Kuwait deployment. How much notice had his unit received and how effective was post-mob training? LTC Merricks said they received 18-months advanced notice, were mobilized in June as a multi-component unit along with USAR elements, and conducted two months of post-mob training at Fort Hood. The two months post-mob training was a about right, but a little long. The units arrived extremely well prepared; ready with day and night flight qualifications completed. The First Army trainers helped with the warfighter exercise and with mission command. First Army had no aircraft so the aviators trained themselves for flight tasks. The team building took place during post-mob training.

COL Manke stated that for an entire CAB, two months of post-mob training is about right and that smaller units require less time. LTC Merricks added that a company does not need two months of post-mob training.

Commissioner Ham asked if flexibility was needed to tailor post-mob training and the answer was yes. COL Manke shared that when slated for the Liberia mission, 34th ID worked with First Army to reduce the training timeline by tailoring for specific mission.

Commissioner Ham asked what came after the unit enters the Reset phase? COL Manke said they would begin commander dialogue in November with the 34th ID to plan for a CTC rotation in FY18 in preparation for FY19 as the available year. Backwards

⁴ OSD AC/RC Tiger Team on Aviation Restructure Initiative, December 2014: AH-64 AC pilots average 1,091 total flying hours with 593 combat flying hours while ARNG AH-64 pilots average 1,016 total flying hours with 280 combat flying hours, but this study doesn't take into consideration additional hours ARNG pilots fly civilian aircraft.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

planning from there means an XCTC⁵ and a staff training exercise in FY17. Combined events throughout the training cycle will help build relationships. ARNG aviation units are running on about a 48-month cycle. He also stated that 60 months cycle is too long with 48 months cycle about right.

Commissioner Ham asked if the 4-year cycle was sustainable with employers. COL Manke answered in the affirmative using his own personal experience. Some troops would like to deploy more frequently, and employers seem supportive. LTC Merricks added that some portion of the CAB has been deployed continuously since 2003, and they have several pilots qualified on multiple airframes.

The meeting ended at 1555. The NCFA members and staff remained in the conference room as the 34th CAB commander and executive officer departed, and the 103rd ESC commander and subordinate brigade commanders came in.

The 103rd ESC meeting began at 1558. Commissioner Ham introduced the role of the Commission and the ADFO addressed the FACA and Sunshine Law provisions.

Commissioner Ham asked how the unit is doing in terms of sustaining readiness, challenges in recruiting and retention, and providing the Army access to the Soldiers within the 103rd ESC. BG McColum explained that the 103rd ESC headquarters is located in Des Moines, Iowa. The command is stationed across five states: Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. These units are embedded in communities and can provide assets or critical sustainment support in times of need if given appropriate authority to do so. The units possess many critical transportation and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) organizations and assets. The 103rd ESC is not having a difficult time sustaining readiness with 85-95% personnel readiness.

Is your recruiting force responsive to your needs? Yes, they are very responsive, and we have fostered close relationships with them to provide a reservoir of qualified people, which speaks to the patriotism of the people here.

BG McColum continued his briefing explaining recent support to communities includes a response by the 206th Regional Sustainment Group to tornado damage in Washington, Illinois, while the unit was conducting home station drill. Three other units participated in homeland support exercises. Within the 103rd ESC, there are two Combat Service Support Battalions critical to sustainment support, one of which is a high-priority battalion with additional resourcing.

⁵ The Army National Guard's eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) program is an instrumented Brigade field training exercise designed to certify Platoon proficiency in coordination with First Army outside Combat Training Centers.

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit to Minnesota

Would it be helpful if there were other authorities available to access USAR units in an effort to provide capabilities to the local communities and the Governors? The current process seems a bit cumbersome to go through the federalizing process. BG McColumn stated that any time we can pull down bureaucracy to be able to provide taxpayer assets in response to an immediate need, we should do so. No specific recommendation was given.

BG McColumn commented the sheer size of the United States makes it necessary for communities to have access to local capabilities, rather than to wait for capabilities to arrive from distant locations. There is nothing more frustrating than sitting back watching a flood take place across the fence and having a water purification capability right next to the need just sitting idle because there is no authority to respond.

The Commission shifted the conversation toward a discussion about support to EUCOM. BG McColumn noted the 103rd ESC is aligned to EUCOM under the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept. 103rd ESC is in discussion with the 21st Theater Sustainment Command to prepare for future support to EUCOM. The increase in EUCOM mission, while downsizing US Army in Europe makes 103rd ESC even more relevant for EUCOM. 103rd ESC will participate in deterrence efforts.

What is the funding status 103rd ESC will use to perform this mission? The funding will be cobbled together from multiple sources.

What is the duration you expect the mission to be? RAF are intended to be habitual, but this one major exercise will be multiple rotations. Each unit will do no more than 29 days at a time. There is an attempt by USAEUR in the works that would provide a small contingent to remain in Europe for the duration of the exercise as continuity under Active Duty Operational Support, Reserve Component (ADOS-RC). In a relatively mature theater, BCTs are not necessarily the type of units needed. This type of exercise support will be good for the unit in terms of retention, as the Soldiers get to perform their jobs in a real world setting, even if not a combat deployment.

The meeting adjourned at 1620 concluding Minnesota site visit, and NCFA personnel returned home.