



National Commission on the Future of the Army

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

Subject: Site Visits with 449th Theater Aviation Brigade, 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG) and 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG) Minutes

Date: 10 June 2015

Time: 1300-1530

Location: Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF), Morrisville, NC

Attendees:

Commissioner Carter F. Ham, Commission Chairman
Commissioner Robert F. Hale
LTC Michael Lockwood, Alternate Designated Federal Officer
MG (Ret) Ray Carpenter, NCFA Executive Director
COL Kristen Dixon – NCFA Staff
LTC Steve Pierce – NCFA Staff
LTC Sean Spence – NCFA Staff

Documents Submitted to Commission:

1. 449th Theater Aviation Brigade briefing
2. 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG) briefing
3. 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion ARI impacts handout
4. 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG) briefing

Meeting Summary

Meeting with all three units took place at the Aviation Support Facility. The following people by unit participated:

- 449th Theater Aviation Brigade (TAB): COL Jeffrey Copeland, Brigade Commander; CSM Gary Hamm, Brigade Command Sergeant Major; CW4 Thomas McAuliffe, Brigade Standardization Pilot.
- 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG): LTC Joseph Bishop, Battalion Commander; CSM Derwood Norris, Battalion Command Sergeant Major; MAJ Mark Vanveldhuizen, Battalion Operations Officer; CW4 Christopher Wilson, Battalion Standardization Pilot; CW4 Kurt Cunningham, Battalion Master Gunner; CW4 John Piland, Battalion Aviation Maintenance Officer.
- 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG): MAJ John McElveen, Battalion Commander; CW4 Austin Norris, Battalion Master Gunner and Standardization Pilot; CW2 George Protzman, Company A Standardization Pilot;

Subject: Site Visits with 449th Theater Aviation Brigade, 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG) and 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG) Minutes

CSM Roy Sullivan, Command Sergeant Major, 59th Aviation Troop Command; LTC James Fidler, Commander, AASF #1 (SCARNG).

At 1300hrs, the ADFO explained the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the entire group from all three units for the discussions. Commissioners and NCFA Staff then toured the AASF's flight simulator to observe AH-64 Apache flight simulator operations demonstrated by unit trainers. While moving to the AASF classroom for briefings from each of the three aviation units, Commissioners were able to see a UH-72A Lakota helicopter and briefly talk with unit personnel about the aircraft's role and capabilities in support of the Governor and State missions.

When they arrived at the classroom at 1350hrs, the Commissioners explained the purpose for their visit to gain information on the questions facing the Commission. The Commissioners also explained that they were interested in the implications of Full Time Support (FTS) manning shortages and effects to unit readiness.

The Brigade Commander presented a briefing on the organization of the unit and recent deployment and mission history. This led to questions and discussion on training for Soldiers across the brigade. One issue highlighted by the brigade command team was the limited amount of training time resourced in a given year. At times, leaders must choose between sending Soldiers to Professional Military Education (PME) or to their scheduled annual training. When Soldiers are not present at annual training, this leaves the unit short personnel to support mission related training and other major training events.

The 449th TAB has not deployed since FY08/09, creating a long dwell time between the next expected deployment. This situation led Commissioners to ask about increasing home station dwell time and retaining skills proficiency. Consensus was that limited training time within the Reserve Component (RC) creates a potential proficiency gap between AC and RC forces. The current deployment cycles can cause an imbalance in the proficiency for reserve components relative to active component. Commissioners then asked for the unit leadership's assessment on the ideal deployment to dwell time. Unit members commented that the current Army policy of 1:5 for reserve components was appropriate during peacetime.

Commissioners shifted the discussion to the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) and asked about effects to the organization and personnel should the unit be deactivated. Unit members responded that unit personnel and their expertise would be lost. Although the Army may offer qualified aviation personnel positions in the active component, many believed that this would not appeal to most RC personnel. Service members join the RC because they don't want to be full time. Unit members generally agreed that without the Apache units in the RC, highly qualified pilots and aviation support personnel would end their service or retire. Commissioner Hale asked about how important it is to have 24 aircraft (battalion authorization) as opposed to 18. A unit Maintenance Test Pilot (MTP) stated that 18 aircraft is fine for garrison training but that

Subject: Site Visits with 449th Theater Aviation Brigade, 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG) and 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG) Minutes

24 aircraft would be required for deployments since the battalion is usually split into multiple task forces to provide support to multiple locations/units.

The two Attack Reconnaissance Battalion Commanders provided briefings on their units' mission, organization, history, deployment history, and recent training exercises. Commissioners asked about FTS manning levels adequacy and training event opportunities. The Commanders offered that having the right FTS and training events opportunities are essential to maintaining expected readiness levels. Commissioner Ham then asked about effectiveness of pre- and post-mobilization training processes. Some unit members said that First US Army personnel made the unit retrain tasks during post-mobilization that the unit had trained as part of pre-mobilization training. Unit personnel also noted that coordination with First Army was getting better.

The 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (NCARNG) highlighted their upcoming collective level training event at the end of July named Carolina Thunder. The event will be executed in coordination with the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG). The 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (SCARNG) then highlighted their overwater training program and recent collective level training exercises.

Commissioners ended the meeting 1530hrs and thanked the unit personnel.