



National Commission on the Future of the Army

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

Subject: Minutes from Site Visits with 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade and A/1-169th Aviation (USAR)

Date: 9 June 2015

Time: 1400-1700

Location: Simmons Army Airfield, Fort Bragg, NC

Attendees:

Commissioner Thomas R. Lamont

Commissioner Robert F. Hale

Commissioner James D. Thurman

LTC Michael Lockwood, Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)

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. 82nd CAB: tri-fold from 1-82nd Attack Reconnaissance Battalion
2. A/1-169th Aviation (USAR): 3 page brief

Meeting Summaries

Commissioners and NCFA Staff met COL Michael Musiol, Brigade Commander, and CSM William Yeargan, Jr., 82d Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) at 1400hrs.

LTC Lockwood explained his role as the ADFO and the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) for this engagement. The Commander explained the Shadow Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) and an AH-64D Apache helicopter via static displays to the Commissioners. Unit personnel discussed the capabilities and characteristics of the two systems. The Commissioners then moved to room at the aircraft hangar to discuss aviation operations in Afghanistan and the downsizing of aviation assets in theater. Discussion indicated general belief that the current theater force structure could support 24-hour operations, but not 24-hour flight operations in all areas of the theater.

Commissioners inquired about the performance of aviation units during overseas operations. Answers indicated proficiency varied by unit in general support/lift operations, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), and attack/ reconnaissance operations.

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Commissioners then discussed aviation personnel requirements, inquiring about the number of personnel who had moved from Regular Army to either Reserve Component. Discussion indicated only a small number of aviation personnel had made the decision to enter into the Reserve Components from the Regular Army.

Commissioners then asked about the Commander's assessment of the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI). The Commander concluded that there is great value in National Guard aviation, but that ARI is the right answer to ensure Army aviation modernization. OH-58Ds were not crash worthy and, according to him, many deaths from helicopter crashes occur in less crash worthy aircraft. When the Apache is teamed with a UAS, this provides the best option for the Army for reconnaissance missions. ARI funds unmanned systems and upgrades for the AH-64 aircraft provides for this manned/unmanned teaming.

Commissioners asked about concerns on deploy to dwell time of Regular Army units. Discussion centered on the viability of a 1:2 ratio for deploy to dwell for Regular Army and the effect this had on military families. Unit members stated that 50% of military marriages end up in divorce and that an underlining cause of this is operational tempo and rotational schedule was high (i.e. below the 1:2 ratio).

Commissioners asked about questions about specific geographic expertise (weather, environment, terrain) with regards to aviation forces and employment in Korea and Germany as examples. This generated discussion about the "depth" (capacity of available pilots) of the aviator force pool.

The final discussion with the 82d CAB centered on Army Aviation being spread thin between Iraq, Afghanistan, rotational forces, division/BCT training, mission rehearsal exercises (MRX), Joint Operational Access Exercises (JOAX), and Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations. The group consensus mirrored earlier comments about challenge of high OPTMEPO.

Commissioners and NCFA Staff then moved across the airfield A/1-169th Aviation (USAR) hangar at 1545hrs to meet with the following personnel: CPT Jason Stanley, Company Commander (AGR); SFC Scott King, First Sergeant and UH-60 Crewchief (AGR); CW3 Daniel Rittler, Company Standardization Pilot (AGR); DAC Kevin Erickson, ASF Supervisor (MILTECH); CW2 Michael Argus, UH-60 Instructor Pilot (TPU) and ASF employee (MILTECH); W01 David Silvia, UH-60 Pilot (TPU); SSG Marshall Lindsay, E Detachment NCOIC (TPU); SGT Samuel Hubbard, Company Standardization Instructor and ASF Employee (MILTECH); SGT Jeffrey Cox, UH-60 Flight Instructor (TPU); and SGT Philip Tarvin, UH-60 Crewchief (TPU).

ADFO explained FACA provisions to begin the discussion with A/1-169th Aviation (USAR). Commissioners proceeded with questions concentrated on flight and training requirements, to include allotted hours in a given year. The unit staff commented that it

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takes approximately 6-8 months for a new aviator to progress to Readiness Level 1 (RL1) and be ready for collective level training.

Commissioners paid particular interest to explanation of the costs of travel for USAR Soldiers when those Soldiers must travel to their unit from home across extended distances. Members of the unit explained that a “lodging in kind” benefit provided for Soldiers would be very helpful by providing payment of lodging expenses when Soldiers travel from greater than 50 miles from their home to unit location for training.

Unit personnel noted that their unit was equipped with a fire bucket that allowed for collection of water and deployment in response to potential wildfire emergencies. This led Commissioners to ask about using 10 USC § 12304a¹ authorization, and the ability of the organization to respond to local emergencies. The unit explained that the request process for Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) employment and reimbursement can be complex based on authorities and jurisdiction.

The Commander went on to praise their maintenance support for aircraft as excellent with the unit maintaining an 84% operational readiness rate over the last five years.

For the final topic of discussion, Commissioners asked about their perspective on Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Unit personnel describe adequate support when scheduling was predictable.

The visit ended at 1700hrs with NFCA Commissioners thanking the A/1-169 staff and commenting that they were impressed with the quality and expertise of the unit members.

¹ 10 USC § 12304a states, “Authority. When a Governor requests Federal assistance in responding to a major disaster or emergency (as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), the Secretary of Defense may, without the consent of the member affected, order any unit, and any member not assigned to a unit organized to serve as a unit, of the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Air Force Reserve to active duty for a continuous period of not more than 120 days to respond to the Governor’s request.”