

## Rice, Edwin B LTC DoD NCFA

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**Subject:** FW: Thursday in Tacoma, Washington

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From: Wayne Perry [mailto:thearmywifedude@hotmail.com]

Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 1:14 PM

To: Moore, Sarah B CPT DoD NCFA

Subject: Thursday in Tacoma, Washington

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Greetings CPT Moore!

This is Wayne Perry. I offered oral remarks last Thursday and didn't know written remarks were recommended/encouraged to go with them. And considering I didn't articulate my points as well as I hoped, I think I will take advantage of the backspace button and see if I can recap/expand on my points and some of the things I said or wanted to say.

Thanks for being there for us.

- 1) Childcare- Childcare is important, especially for new and JR families because quality childcare is rarely affordable. And for most of us we won't choose to use our limited resources to pay for that quality care we desire. With the instability found in our lives it is hard to move into a community and find someone we can entrust our children with. But we trust our fellow community members and we trust our community leaders. And without more emphasis relying on other milfams, it is important the quality and affordable childcare, even in babysitter form, is available to us for morale and readiness reasons. \*\*Although Sitter-City was a great resource, it wasn't affordable to the bulk of the force.\*\*
- 2) Families add value- We all know families can be beneficial to our troops, but perhaps for the Force of the Future we may want to consider ourselves more family oriented(providing compensation can keep pace). It may be more beneficial as we shape our future force to emphasize a more mature recruit. We will always need grunts but there may be added value in recruiting families and individuals who display resiliency prior to joining. In a time of major conflict we can fill the ranks as needed and lower standards but in this time of reformation, it is not a time to lower standards. A more mature recruit may mean more mental toughness which can translate into less challenges for leaders and also less problems for the service member on their transition in and on their transition out in addition to better choices during their service. Crossfit and a healthy lifestyle are beginning to trend. Many of today's 35 yr olds are 2001's 25 year olds.
- 3) Prepare for military compensation to deteriorate- Right outside the gate of Joint Base Lewis-McChord(JBLM) the minimum wage is being debated into going up to \$15 per hour. An hour away from JBLM in Seattle minimum wage has already been increased to \$15 per hour and this is a trend that is growing around the nation. Specifically for fast food workers. While the reaction to such a high wage is being seen differently depending on who we ask and it may not be as common as many had hoped, minimum wage is clearly on the rise because that is what America seems to want. And with a rising minimum wage to go along with affordable healthcare and affordable/free college, the compensation gap that has been created to equip us with a quality force will erode at a much quicker pace than it was built up. If that happens, we may find ourselves pulling from courthouses for our recruits again and before long we would find another round of problems with the core values being compromised(for example toxic leadership, sexual assaults, domestic violence, etc). Military service is never about the compensation unless we are having a compensation conversation.

4) Give our troops a voice- Commission??s like this by the DoD and the membership based VSO??s are the voice for our troops however their has been an inability to work well together and I charge many VSO??s, specifically those making up the Military Coalition, I charge them with denying sensible reform in the name of denying reform completely and across the board. Denying reform and preventing it can become a readiness issue in addition to a morale and wellbeing issue should compensation deteriorate as I mentioned above.

5) You won??t get my boys- If everyone doesn??t start working better together, I won??t be able to encourage my boys to choose the military anymore. If it is nearly as beneficial to live at home, work at Starbucks and get free college plus use Obamacare, I will teach my boys one of the thousands of others ways they can serve our nation. If the reward doesn??t compare with the risk, they are smart boys, they will know the better deal when they see it. Now let??s hope the VA doesn??t fail their mom when she gets out because they are already watching. But I do hope we will make sure her healthcare is covered/fixed as that was a big motivator for her joining.

6) One last thing- The commissary. And that??s all I am going to say about that and with that I am going to drop the mic.

At this time I turned around and walked away not knowing they had the chance to ask questions. So since I figured I was standing at the mic again I picked it up, however I don??t remember what I said. I??ve said it so many times and so many different ways I don??t want to try quoting myself. But I will say this:

The commissary, it??s not always worth the trip but it means something to us. I get it. It is one of the only places you can walk in to at just about any time and see our force of the future, our current force and our past force all smiling and congregating together. But it isn??t the benefit it once was and mentioning it in the same breath with BAH, basic pay, healthcare and retirement is a slap in the face to the force of the future.

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Perry