



National Commission on the Future of the Army

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

SUBJECT: NCFA 10 July 2015, Site Visit to Ellington Field and Conroe, Texas Minutes

Date: 10 July 2015

Time: 0920-1320

Location: Texas Army National Guard, Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF), Ellington Field, TX; US Army Reserve, Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF), Conroe TX

Format: Unit briefings and discussions

Documents Submitted to Commission: (1) 75th Division Command Brief, (2) 1-149th ARB Overview and take home packet, (3) 1-158th ARB Command Brief

Attendees:

Commissioner Robert Hale

Commissioner Larry Ellis

Commissioner JD Thurman

COL Kurt Weinand – NCFA Staff

LTC Greg Hartvigsen – NCFA Staff

LTC Steve Pierce– NCFA Staff

LTC Sean Spence– NCFA Staff

Mr. Mark Pizzuto –Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)

MG James Young Jr., Commander 75th Training Command, USAR

Sabrina Aja 1SG, TPU (Veterans Administration)

Tyson Voelkel, MAJ TPU (Management Consultant)

Timothy Taite, CW3 TPU (Broker for Bank of America)

Valerie Wilhoite, SGT TPU (Unit Administrator)

George Penrod, (COL(R)) MIL TECH (CXO)

Rafael Perez, (CPT) MILTECH (SSA)

Renee Taylor, (CPT) MILTECH (LMS)

Scheyda Stasik, GS 12 DAC (Family Programs Director)

Eric Hopkins, GS 11 DAC (G6, IT Specialist)

Patricia White, MSG AGR (Training NCO)

Carlos Gutierrez, SFCAGR (Training NCO)

Christian Bionat, 1LT TPU (Law Student)

Elmer Brewer, CW3 AGR (Food Service Technician)

MG William Smith, Deputy Adjutant General, Texas Army National Guard

COL James "Bo" Kenyon, TXARNG, Commander 36th CAB

COL Richard P. Adams, TXARNG, State Aviation Officer

COL Stanley Jones, TX Air National Guard, Commander Ellington Field Joint Readiness Base and the 147th Reconnaissance Wing

Lt. Col Nigel Atkins, TX Air National Guard, Commander 147th ASOS

SUBJECT: NCFA 10 July 2015, Site Visit to Ellington Field and Conroe, Texas Minutes

LTC Robert T. Jarrett Jr, TXARNG, Executive Officer 36th CAB
LTC Derrek Hryhorchuk, TXARNG, Commander Houston AASF
MAJ(P) Scott P. Nicholas, TXARNG, Commander 1-149th ARB
CW5 Stephen White, TXARNG, Brigade Maintenance Officer

Meeting Summary

At 0920hrs, Mr. Pizzuto, ADFO, and Commissioner Hale provided opening remarks and introductions. Commissioner Hale informed them of the purpose of the National Commission on the Future of the Army. The ADFO discussed the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the discussions with all three units at Ellington Field.

Commissioners Hale, Ellis and Thurman along with the NCFA Staff began discussions with the 75th Training Command, USAR, Commander and his staff. NCFA sought the unit's unique perspectives on Mission Command and Staff Training (MCST), staff assessments and exercise design/execution in a Total Army Integrated Training Environment for Army elements. The Commander explained the unit is dispersed over 22 States with over 2200 Soldiers and Civilians, to provide (through its five (5) subordinate Divisions) a wide and varied range of MCST to AC, USAR, and NGB Soldiers, as well as to other Services and allied nations. His key points:

- a) Army Reserve trainers are involved in preparing units to work for combatant commands globally by working with all three components for collective training and as staff Observer / Controller / Trainers for Battalion and Brigade level staffs, specifically MCST.
- b) The Command is restructuring to comply with the reduction in size of headquarters, and relies on funding for the demands placed by the combatant commands. Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) funding is always required for 7-10 days beyond the statutory 39 days. MG Young recommended funding ADOS for Title 10, para 12304b, utilization should be similar to the National Guard and Reserves Equipment Account (NGREA).

Q: GEN(R) Ellis asked, "Are you involved in Afghanistan?"

A: MG Young – We are not deployed there but our efforts are certainly present there as we prepare a great number of the deploying units and we have provided individual deploying Soldiers. [This theme was later amplified by remarks from a 75th TC major.]

Q: GEN(R) Thurman: Did you assist CFLCC prepare for Iraqi Freedom in 2002?

A: MG Young: I am not sure but that most certainly is what we are designed to do and it is likely this is a mission we took part in.

Q: GEN(R) Ellis: Do you feel good about your relationship with First Army?

A: MG Young: I do, however, friction points do arise because I receive my funding and mission priority from USARC and the amount isn't always sufficient to support what First Army would like me to do. Aside from this, LTG Tucker is all in on Total Army Training and appreciates the

SUBJECT: NCFA 10 July 2015, Site Visit to Ellington Field and Conroe, Texas Minutes

75th TC contributions. We also provision First Army Division West with TF Braveheart (41 mobilized Soldiers) at North Fort Hood.

Q: GEN (R) Ellis: Is that due to the 39 days for training funding level?

A: MG Young: Yes and that requires us to make adjustments. For example, last year I supported Battalion level CPXs with up to six Observer Controllers. This year due to funding constraints this number is down to two OCs for the same event.

This elicited GEN(R) Thurman's response: Training without evaluators is a wasted training event. You need the OCs to uphold the standard. In USFK most of the deployers are reserve component and we relied heavily on the 75th TC when I was the commander there. Not supporting training with OCs is what is getting broken here.

Q: GEN(R) Ellis: Can you support CABs? And can you train other functional units? CABs just come to mind.

A: MG Young: We can. We have the generic mission command and staff operations expertise. We select our teams and scale and tailor them to whatever capability we are training. We'll do this by going to other CABs in either the National Guard or the Army Reserve and drawing the subject matter expertise required to build that team.

The Command Executive Officer remarked the 75th took part in training three ARNG CABs while he was mobilized as an exercise planner and Observer Controller/Trainer (OC/T).

The Army has not yet defined the Operational Reserve as a term of reference or decided how it should be funded. MG Young recommended the Commission examine this and consider recommending a National Guard and Reserve Equipping Appropriation (NGREA) like account established by Congress for funding a portion of an Operational Reserve as a way to focus the effort and reduce tension on the topic. This elicited a response by Mr. Hale that it isn't a matter of not having the right funding pots, but rather the amounts are currently insufficient in each pot. GEN(R) Thurman commented that as the Army G-3, 13% of the Army budget was dedicated to training. MG Young concluded his opening remarks and invited the Commissioners to direct questions to the Soldier panel.

Q: GEN(R) Thurman: How much of your time is taken up with AR 350-1 training requirements?

A: 75th TC MAJ Voelkel : This weekend, for example, all but four hours of our battle assembly will be spent on 350-1 requirements. The rest of the time will be allocated to SHARP topics and completing other administrative tasks. Often times, we will fill an auditorium with Soldiers and complete 350-1 tasks with Power Point presentations because there are so many requirements and little time that this is the fastest way to complete them. The time left over is spent with preparing for other assigned missions such as State Funeral duty for retired presidents living in our area – we have to make sure those plans are kept up to date and we have people to execute them.

Q: GEN(R) Ellis: What is the right mobilization frequency ratio? Should it be 1:5 or 1:6? What's your opinion?

SUBJECT: NCFA 10 July 2015, Site Visit to Ellington Field and Conroe, Texas Minutes

A: 75th TC CW3 Taite : I have been mobilized three times and mobilizing isn't a challenge for me. 1:5 would be acceptable.

A: 75th TC MAJ Voelkel : I believe we should get credit for the pre-mob training that we do and not have to repeat it during mobilization. Some of this can be accomplished online.

After meeting with MG Young and staff, the Commissioners continued discussion with TXARNG personnel beginning at 1100hrs. MG Smith briefly introduced the members of the TXARNG and made opening remarks, then turned the time to MAJ (P) Scott Nicholas the commander of the 1-149th ARB.

MAJ Nicholas presented a briefing summarizing the unit, its history, experience base, training overview and deployment history. He further discussed in detail the method of training aviators from individual training up through collective level training at the battalion level. MAJ Nicholas outlined the combined and joint training typically conducted by the unit. Commissioners asked questions related to the flying hours per aviator that are allocated to the battalion and the level of full-time manning for the Aviation Support Facility. MAJ Nicholas voiced concern should the unit lose FTS personnel.

Commissioners then asked MAJ Nicholas for his assessment of how many days are appropriate for post-mobilization training and what is a feasible BOG:Dwell for his unit. He indicated 30-45days post-mobilization training as adequate and a 1:3 BOG:Dwell ratio is feasible if predictable.

After moving from Ellington Field to the AASF, Conroe, TX, at 1230hrs, Commissioner Thurman departed for home while Commissioner Hale and Commissioner Ellis met with 1-158th Attack/Recon Helicopter Battalion (ARB). The ADFO discussed the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the discussions. Commissioner Hale provided opening remarks and introductions.

Attendees from 1-158th ARB:

LTC	Edmund Naughton	AGR Bn Commander
Mr	James Lynch	AASF- Conroe Facility Supervisor
MAJ	Derrick Hart	BN XO
1LT	Guthrie, Nathaniel	AGR A Co Commander
MAJ	Marisol Chalas	AGR BN S3
CW4	DeJesus, Melvin	AGR BN Standardization Pilot
CW3	Villareal, James	TPU/MILTECH Aircraft Maintainer
CW2	Donica, Holly	TPU/MILTECH Aircraft Maintainer
SSG	Melendez, Angel	AGR BN S3 NCOIC
SGT	Grant, Taniqua	AGR BN Training NCO
SFC	Rodriguez, David	AGR, E Co Training NCO
SFC	Tack, Lowell	TPU/MILTECH Aircraft Maintainer
SPC	Valladares, Michael	TPU Flight Operations/USPS Ramp Agent
SSG	Gonzalez, Juan	TPU Aircraft Mechanic/ASF Maintenance Supervisor

SUBJECT: NCFA 10 July 2015, Site Visit to Ellington Field and Conroe, Texas Minutes

LTC Naughton presented a briefing summarizing the unit, its history, experience base, training overview and deployment history. This discussion focused on the conversion of this unit from an Attack/Recon Battalion with AH-64 Apaches to an Assault Helicopter Battalion (AHB) with UH-60 Blackhawks. Commissioners asked questions about resources available to retrain aircrews and maintainers. The unit and AASF Facility Supervisor expressed concerns that even though class seats were allocated for retraining, this does not mean funding for pay and allowances would be available to bring on traditional part-time reservists to fill those seats.

The unit commander indicated that most aviators living in the local area will convert to Blackhawk pilots to remain with the unit. He only anticipated losing pilots that already live closer to an ARNG Blackhawk unit than to Conroe, TX. The Battalion Commander pointed out that one of the Apache Helicopter Pilots was a Single Mom and that this unit provided the stability and predictability for her to continue to serve.

The meeting closed at 1320hrs with the Commissioners thanking everyone for offering their opinions and personal experiences and indicating more information about the Commission's activities, along with the how to provide input, could be found at www.ncfa.ncr.gov.