



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Public Minutes of December 2017 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on December 14-15, 2017. The meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and was closed to the public pursuant to Public Law 114-328, section 554(b)(3).

Attendance

Commissioners present:

- Mr. Edward T. Allard III
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Mark Gearan
- Ms. Avril Haines
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Janine Davidson

Others present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Keri Lowry, Director of Governmental and Public Engagement
- Gregory Brinsfield, Director of Operations (present except for portion of 12/15 meeting)
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Rachel Rikleen, Deputy General Counsel (present for portions)
- Yolanda Hands, Operations Program Manager (present except for portion of 12/15 meeting)

- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations (present except for portion of 12/15 meeting)
- LTC Marc Austin, OUSD(P&R), Office of Manpower & Reserve Affairs (present for portion of 12/14 meeting)
- Sandy Scott, Corporation for National and Community Service (present for portion of 12/15)

December 14, 2017 Session

At approximately 0900, Commissioners gathered at the Commission’s offices to sign non-disclosure agreements relating to a classified briefing scheduled for the morning. Commissioners and staff then traveled to an offsite location in Crystal City for a series of briefings provided by representatives from the Department of Defense (DoD).

Upon arrival at the offsite location, the Chairman moved to close sessions on December 14-15 to the public in part because there would be classified information briefed and in part because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. All Commissioners present agreed.

Briefing by Joint Staff Directorate for Intelligence

Beginning at approximately 0925, Commissioners received a classified threat briefing from CAPT Andrew J. Charles, Deputy to the Deputy Director for Analysis & Warning (DJ22) in the Joint Staff Directorate for Intelligence (J2).

Briefing by Army Marketing Research Group (AMRG)

Beginning at approximately 1110, Commissioners received a briefing from the Army Marketing Research Group (AMRG), titled “Increasing Propensity for Military Service through Marketing.” COL Johnny Oliver, Deputy Director of AMRG, led the briefing. Also in attendance were CSM Luther Legg, Senior Enlisted Advisor; John Jessup, Director of Research; LTC Margaret Nowicki, Special Assistant; and Andrea Zucker, Deputy Director of Research.

AMRG began by discussing the four main challenges faced by Army recruiting: the civilian-military divide; misperceptions about military service; the fact that fewer Americans meet military service qualifications than in the past; and changing career values.

AMRG then addressed ways in which marketing can increase the propensity to serve.

Briefing on Reserve Mobilization

Beginning at 1:00pm, CDR Teague “Swami” Swalm briefed the Commission on reserve mobilization. CDR Swalm is the Deputy Director of Mobilization within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, which is part of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Briefing on Army Accession Program

Beginning at approximately 1410, the Commission received a briefing on Army recruitment, assessment, and selection processes from Paul Aswell, Chief of the Accessions Division in the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, G1.

The session ended at approximately 1545. Commissioners and staff returned to the Commission's offices for further discussions.

Launch Event Deliberation

At approximately 1600, the Commission held a discussion about the upcoming Commission rollout event, scheduled for January 18, 2018. Mr. Abernathy began by outlining the objectives of the event. Mr. Brinsfield updated Commissioners on potential venues. Ms. Lowry outlined the preliminary structure for the event. Commissioners and staff then discussed potential panelists and speakers.

The December 14, 2017 session concluded at approximately 1705.

December 15, 2017 Session

The Commission resumed its meeting at approximately 0800 on December 15, 2017. All Commissioners except for Dr. Davidson were present. Staff present included Mr. Abernathy, Mr. Brinsfield, Dr. Rough, Ms. Lowry, and Mr. Leks. Ms. Rikleen and Mr. Scott joined the meeting during the presentation by Peace Corps.

Reflections on Service: Lt Col Becky Lange

Lt Col Becky Lange (USAF) is an alum of the AmeriCorps program. She was inspired to join AmeriCorps following the State of the Union Address in 1995, during which President Clinton discussed AmeriCorps and the then-new initiative now known as CNCS.

Lt Col Lange joined AmeriCorps and served in the second class of NCC. She was stationed at Lowry AFB in South Dakota and provided security for the Olympic Games in Atlanta, among other projects. She then attended the University of Colorado. She later served as a Fellow for Senator Bill Nelson, and in her military career, worked for a time for Chairman Dempsey on the Joint Staff.

Lt Col Lange remains on active duty. She is a squadron commander in cyber intelligence at Fort Meade, with 240 people in her squadron. She describes her squadron as 90% Millennial.

Lt Col Lange shared her thoughts on service with the Commission. She noted that while many have gone from the military to AmeriCorps, few have gone from AmeriCorps to the military.

Commissioners asked for her views about a universal call for service. Lt Col Lange, stated that based on her experience working closely with Millennials, they do not like to be issued specific things to do. Rather, a message to Millennials might be along the lines of "get involved, but get involved in your own way. Figure out what matters to you, and find a way to do something about it."

Commissioners asked how important monetary incentives were in Lt Col Lange's decision to join AmeriCorps. She said they were absolutely important. She had to pay for college, and had to find out how to do it. She had always volunteered growing up and had a mother who did random acts of kindness. But she does not know if she could have afforded to serve without the financial support provided by the program.

Briefing by Service Year Alliance

The Commission received a briefing by Shirley Sagawa regarding Service Year Alliance (SYA). Ms. Sagawa serves as President and CEO of SYA.

SYA's vision is to make a year of service common among young Americans, and its short-term goal is to grow service opportunities for young Americans to 100,000 per year. Currently, about 65,000 people serve in AmeriCorps, PeaceCorps, and the privately-funded organizations under SYA's umbrella.

SYA's view is that a service year generates a "triple bottom line." First, a service year changes the lives of the young people who provide service. Second, a service year solves problems. Ms. Sagawa noted that this means more than just seeming helpful; it requires addressing problems at scale using evidence-based strategies. Third, a service year develops a diverse group of leaders.

Briefing by the Peace Corps

The Commission received a briefing on the Peace Corps from Sheila Crowley, Director of the Peace Corps.

According to Ms. Crowley, the Peace Corps since its founding has focused on grassroots efforts in places where a local or host government has invited it. The PeaceCorps works in six sectors: education (about 40% of its work); agriculture; community economic development; health; youth in development; and the environment. Further background on the Peace Corps and its history is at slides 2-7.

Since 2010, the Peace Corps has undertaken an effort to modernize its recruiting. In 2010, the Peace Corps received fewer than 10,000 applications, which was an all-time low. Following improved recruiting efforts, applications since 2014 have been steadily over 20,000 per year. One change was to introduce "choice" to Peace Corps applicants. Prior to 2014, the Peace Corps directed recruits to the locations that had the most need. From 2014 to the present, the Peace Corps has allowed applicants to choose where they want to volunteer. About 50% of volunteers choose their destinations, while the remainder agree to go wherever need dictates.

Reflections on Service: Julia Bouchelle

Ms. Bouchelle served in Peace Corps for three years in Panama. The first two years she served as a Peace Corps volunteer, and she remained for a third year to serve as a volunteer leader.

She identified several factors that led her to service. She attended a Jesuit college where service was a core value. She also had experience representing the country as a soccer player and

wanted to represent the country in a different way. And she had a long-standing interest in giving back to others.

Ms. Bouchelle also explained what attracted her to the Peace Corps. First, it would be a challenge and she could learn about herself. Second, there were professional benefits, including being part of the Peace Corps network, and relief from graduate school student loans. Third, it would present a leadership opportunity. Ultimately it was the leadership opportunity that led Ms. Bouchelle to remain in Panama for a third year. Fourth, it was an opportunity to work abroad, which distinguished Peace Corps from AmeriCorps (which Ms. Bouchelle also considered). Fifth, unlike AmeriCorps, Peace Corps was a two-year commitment, which is something Ms. Bouchelle was looking for.

City Year and Voices for National Service

AnnMaura Connolly, who serves as the Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President of City Year as well as the President of Voices for National Service (VNS), introduced a City Year volunteer, Chris Doyle, to provide the Commission with reflections on his service. Following Mr. Doyle's presentation, she provided briefings on City Year and VNS.

Reflections on Service: Chris Doyle

Chris Doyle is a CityYear volunteer, currently in his second year with City Year. Last year, he served in Wisconsin and this year he is serving in Washington, DC, in the Southeast in Ward 8. Mr. Doyle is 25 years old.

Mr. Doyle began by telling Commissioners a story of a current student of his, Andre. Mr. Doyle's attention to Andre made a meaningful impact on Andre's ability to improve his schoolwork and self-esteem.

Mr. Doyle pursued service to follow in footsteps of his family. He said he always wanted to be a teacher, as were his mother and grandfather. He had been interested in teaching and worked in education since graduating from college. He was led to City Year for a few reasons. A mentor suggested he consider City Year, and it would give him an opportunity to move away from home. At the same time, it would allow him to work with students in education though he felt he was not ready for the responsibility that would come with being a primary teacher (for example, in Teach for America). Incentives were also a factor. He said that after 1700 hours of service, he would qualify for education awards that would enable matching or discounted tuition at universities with which City Year has partnerships.

Briefing on City Year

Ms. Connolly then briefed the Commission on City Year.

City Year was founded 30 years ago. AmeriCorps helped to expand City Year across the country, particularly given the CNCS resource focus on education (about 50%). Currently, there are over 3,000 City Year members in 28 cities at 313 high-need schools. City Year defines a "high need school" as one with a graduation rate less than 50%. City Year is also in three cities in the United Kingdom and in Johannesburg, South Africa. There are now approximately 30,000

City Year alumni. This network has helped to create a pipeline for City Year participants to move into education jobs following their City Year experience.

Those chosen serve a full school year and work full time, living on a stipend. The City Year “special sauce,” as Ms. Connolly described it, is the near-peer connection: in other words, the teachers are not so dissimilar in terms of age from the students they are teaching. In this way, they help to show students the future. Ms. Connolly noted that City Year teachers make positive calls to home which is something new for many of the students being taught and goes hand-in-hand with the optimistic, can-do spirit and energy that City Year attempts to foster.

Ms. Connolly closed by noting that City Year since its beginnings has always been bipartisan and has always had an interest in advancing policy objectives.

Briefing on Voices for National Service

Ms. Connolly next briefed the Commission on Voices for National Service (VNS), for which she serves as President.

VNS is a steering committee for 27 different service organizations, including City Year. VNS engages in a number of activities, including focus groups and polling; development of national service policy; engaging with the Hill.

Briefing on Partnership for Public Service

Max Stier, President of the Partnership for Public Service (PPS), briefed the Commission on PPS and its goal to improve the federal government. Mr. Khazei, Mr. Brinsfield, and the Operations team were not present for this presentation.

At the start of his presentation, he noted that PPS sponsors the Service to America Awards – known as the “Sammys” – which are intended to honor federal employees and, in the process, improve communication with the federal government work force.

Mr. Stier next provided the Commission with an overview of what’s “broken” in the federal government on the civilian side. He then briefed the Commission on opportunities for improvement.

Reflections on Service: Andrew Beccara

Andrew Beccara served as an intern at PPS. He then interned twice at the Department of State before being hired at State for a full-time job. Mr. Beccara, who held five internships in two years before obtaining employment, illustrates some of the difficulties associated with gaining entry to the federal workforce from the outside.

Commission Deliberations

The Commission reconvened at 1330 to address various business and administrative matters.

Approval of Minutes

The Chairman led a discussion about the proposed minutes for the Commission's November 2017 meeting. Following this discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the November 2017 minutes as amended.

December 13 Meeting with Congress

Chairman Heck reported on a series of meetings held on December 13, 2017, with members and staff from the Senate and House Armed Services Committees.

Rollout Event

Mr. Abernathy and Ms. Lowry led a discussion on the January 18, 2018 rollout event. Commissioners deliberated several aspects of the event.

Draft Research Plan

Dr. Rough led a discussion on the current draft of the Commission research plan. She divided the plan into four phases, and her discussion focused on the first phase, which would cover at least the first half of 2018. Dr. Rough described the goal to visit urban and rural locations around the United States in a variety of locations and with a diversity of audience types.

Commissioners then endorsed the view that the Commission only use figures that Dr. Rough has validated. They also supported the view that the interim report include information about statistics and other issues that may be subject to misperception.

Operations Update

Mr. Brinsfield briefed Commissioners on the status of operations. He discussed the status of securing information technology resources and then addressed the status of the Commission website. Chairman Heck then informed Commissioners that the Commission would be using a .gov web address – www.inspire2serve.gov – instead of a .us domain.

Mr. Brinsfield then briefed Commissioners on personnel and human resources, facility issues, financial management, and travel management.

Legal & Ethics Update

Mr. Lekas began by briefing the commissioners on policies adopted by the Commission. He provided an update on other legal and regulatory activities. Mr. Lekas then briefed the Commissioners on the No Fear Act and the Commission's policy on discrimination, retaliation, and other matters covered by the Act. Ms. Rikleen then provided Commissioners with ethics training focused on gifts.

Executive Session

At the conclusion of the above, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff. The executive session concluded at approximately 1515.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on January 19, 2018