

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission Commission Meeting

**Room 680, Executive Conference Room
Truman State Office Building
Jefferson City, MO 6510
January 12, 2011**

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Present: Chairman Dalton Wright; Jeff Bloemker; Katie Steele Danner, DED Designee; Bryan Hunt, Deputy Director, MVC for Larry Kay; Representative Scott Largent; Kent Thomas; and Robert Welling.

Advisory Members Present: Tony Bamvakais, MONG; Maj. General Stephen Danner, MONG; Roger Layman, Army Reserve Advisory Member; and Brgd. General Arvid West, MVC Ad Hoc Member.

Guests Present: Sherry L. Anderson, DED; Cindy Hall, Senator McCaskill's Office; Martin Dempsey, Quality of Life Issues State Liaison, Midwest Region (IA, KS, MN, MO and NE); Captain Mike Roberts, MONG; and G. Michael Warren, Director, Public Affairs, Fort Leonard Wood.

The January 12, 2011 meeting of the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Dalton Wright.

Review of Meeting Minutes

Chairman Wright presented the minutes from the December 15, 2010 Conference Call to be approved. With a quorum not present, the minutes were tabled and will be presented at the next MMPEC meeting.

Guest Speaker – Martin Dempsey, Quality of Life State Liaison, Midwest Region (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE)

Mr. Dempsey thanked the Chairman and MMPEC members for inviting him to the meeting and for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Defense's Key Quality of Life Issues, Central Region Environmental and Government Affairs November, 2010 report.

Chairman Wright asked Mr. Dempsey to explain why Missouri's scoring had changed drastically from 2009 to 2010 when several best practice priorities (as identified by DoD) had been adopted by the Missouri General Assembly and signed into law.

Mr. Dempsey stated all the issues were under evaluation and it was determined that Missouri's laws did not meet some of the criterion outlined in the 10 key qualities of life issues. He further added that perhaps Missouri's laws maybe lacking a particular component that caused the State to receive lower evaluations.

The Commission members asked Mr. Dempsey to provide more detail to his statement:

1. Increase Key Support for Guard and Reserve Members and Their Families: The high deployment levels of the Guard and Reserve necessitate a reciprocal level of support for the needs of our service members and their families. The desired outcome is that states provide important support elements which should be common throughout the states.

Metric Concept: States include the 5 best practices:

1. Tax relief for Guard/Reserve members – 20 points
2. Tax Exemptions for Disabled Veterans – 20 points
3. Tax Exemptions for Next of Kin – 15 points
4. State-sponsored home loan program – 20 points
5. Automatic license extension for Drivers license – 10 points
6. Automatic license extension for Professions – 15 points

2. Ensure Deployment Separation Does Not Determine Child Custody Decisions: Extended separations due to military service necessarily alter short-term custody/visitation arrangements and can have long-term consequences. The desired outcome is for states to appropriately balance the interests of service members while preserving the best interests of the child; address delegation of visitation rights; and expedite court dockets and use electronic communications to accommodate military demands.

Metric Concept: Weight the protections according to compliance importance:

1. Military service should not serve as the sole basis for altering custody – 30 points
2. No permanent orders – 20 points
3. Reinstated automatically within a set time upon the return of the military parent – 20 points
4. Visitation rights to be delegated to a third person – 20 points
5. Administrative procedures:
 - (a) Electronic testimony, if convenient for the Service member (5 points)
 - (b) Expedited hearings (5 points)

3. Increase Access to Quality, Affordable Childcare for Military Families: Demand for child care continues to out-pace capacity. The desired outcome is that states integrate DoD standards into their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) for child care programs. Through statewide QRISs, DoD can identify providers eligible for 'approved' status (subsidized care) and partner with other providers to help them reach that status.

Metric Concept: States are rated green when they achieve both a QRIS that includes DoD standards, and annual evaluations of child care programs receiving subsidies. States are rated yellow if they have established a QRIS and have an evaluation process. States are rated red if they have not achieved a QRIS and opened a working relationship with DoD.

4. Minimize School Disruption for Military Children During Transition and Deployment:

Military life creates challenges for children who attend an average of 8 schools in 12 years plus endure the anxiety of parental separation during deployments. The desired outcome is that states participate in an interstate compact which establishes common guidelines for handling issues (class and course placement, records transfer, immunizations, graduation, and extra-curricular opportunities) that impact military children transitioning between schools.

5. Remove Licensure Impediments for Military Spouses and Service Members Leaving the Military:

State licensing and professional credentialing requirements can limit career options for frequently relocating military spouses and separating/retiring Service members. The desired outcome is that states offer alternative certification and credentialing options and streamlined licensing procedures to support the unique needs of working military spouses and separating Service members.

6. Provide Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for Military Spouses: Frequent moves substantially impact the income of our Service families. The desired outcome is that states recognize that, unlike the private sector, a move mandated by military orders is not ‘voluntary’ and therefore, the accompanying spouse should qualify for unemployment compensation if otherwise eligible.

Established Metric: States are rated green when they enact legislation and red if there is no expressed interest in considering legislation. There is no intermediary step for this issue that could be designated yellow.

7. Promote Consumer Protections and Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation:

Service members and their families are vulnerable to unscrupulous practices. Additionally, some lending practices create a cycle of debt for service members and their families, thus detracting from quality of life and military preparedness. The desired outcome is for states to work with the military community to identify consumer concerns and to fully enforce DoD Regulation on payday, vehicle title, and refund anticipation loans.

8. Improve Absentee Voting for Military Members and Their Families: Citizens need assurance their vote will be counted. The desired outcome is that states authorize flexible processes for absentee voters in the areas recommended by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Office.

9. Comport State Laws with DoD Rules on Disposition: Many states require disposition of remains be determined through state-specific documentation or by a priority sequence of next of kin. The desired outcome is for states to recognize the person authorized to direct disposition (PADD) selected by the service member on DD Form 93 (Record of Emergency Data), in accordance with Federal law.

10. Coordinate State-wide Public-Private Support: Some issues require a comprehensive approach, best facilitated by state governments. Efficiently supporting military families requires coordination. Establishing long-range plans for foreign language development to support

national objectives requires collaboration between public and private entities. The desired outcome is for states to mobilize resources, and create committees that can facilitate state-wide coordination and long range planning.

Questions from Commission members and Advisory Group regarding Mr. Dempsey's presentation:

MG Danner asked why DoD had failed to recognize that Missouri did pass the "Absentee Voting for Military Members and Their Family Act" during the 2010 legislative session. Mr. Dempsey stated that he was not sure why it was not listed but he would look into the matter.

Chairman Wright voiced his concerns as well as several of the Commission members that the perception of Missouri is not a "military-friendly state" and this could have very negative effect on future BRAC considerations. MMPEC must be proactive and provide a list of all the inroads the State has made especially in 2010 with passage of the Omnibus Veterans Bill.

MG Danner commented that 2005, when BRAC voted to take away the F-15C Eagle, the United States Air Force's 131st Bomb Wing B-2 Unit of the Missouri Air National Guard moved from St. Louis to Whiteman Air Force Base (considered active duty), but the Troops or their spouses were not covered under Title 32, which has been a standard practice for the Guard.

Ms. Steele Danner stated that as the wife of The Adjutant General, she is personally involved with the Family Advisory Council and the Family Readiness Group. Family Readiness is Mission Readiness and Family Readiness is the level of awareness Families and their Guard Members in preparation for the call to state or federal active duty. The six steps are: 1. Processing; 2. Welcome Briefing; 3. Training; 4. Pre-Deployment; 5. Deployment; and 6. Reunion. She stated she can attest to the dedication of the communities throughout the State because serving in the National Guard can present new challenges to military Families. The NG families are facing many challenges and to be able to address their concerns and to ask questions regarding family support, and the importance role the families have in terms of retention and readiness. The best way to help and support our Families is to hear about their experiences so we can make improvements in order to improve their quality of life.

Commission Business Meeting

Advisory Member Reports

Michael Warren, Director, Public Affairs, Fort Leonard Wood

Mr. Warren reported the Fort is the recovery progress with donations coming in from all across the state and within the surrounding communities. The EF3 tornado that hit the Fort on Friday, December 31st, destroying approximately 35 homes and 141 experienced some type of damage and leaving only minor injuries to a few residents. Army Chief of Staff General George W. Casey visited the installation on January 4 to assess the damages and to provide morale support.

Mr. Warren announced the 2011 U.S. Army Engineer Regimental Conference (ENFORCE), will be held April 6-9 at FLW. The ENFORCE 2011 theme is “A Timeless Profession.” The conference brings together expertise spanning all components, combat engineers, geospatial engineers, and general engineers.

Missouri Veterans Commission

Bryan Hunt, Deputy Director, MVC announced the MVC’s Legislative Day at the Capitol will be February 1st. Rep. Jerry Nolte (D-33), Gladstone, has filed House Current Resolution No. 11 urging the United States Congress to designate the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City as the “National World War I Memorial.” It was suggested that MMPEC propose a resolution supporting House Current Resolution No. 11.

Missouri National Guard

Maj. General Stephen Danner, MONG announced luckily the MONG facility at FLW did not sustain any damage as the results of the December 31st tornado. Governor Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency, the order from the Governor follows on those initial steps by activating the Missouri State Emergency Operations Plan, which allows state agencies to coordinate directly with local jurisdictions to provide emergency services. The MG accompanied the Governor during his aerial and ground assessments of communities in Dent, Phelps and St. Louis counties that were hit directly by the storms.

MG Danner commented that the states with higher rankings and the most stars on the “Key Quality of Life Issues” grid are states that have more and better resources to draw from because they either have strong military councils or they have a cabinet designation within their state government --- a department of military affairs. A good example is the state of Kansas that has a very strong and powerful military council that is highly regarded around the nation.

Mr. Bloemker stated that with a working military council perhaps the MMPEC would be able to enlist support to thwart off BRAC closings in the State.

MG Danner voiced his concerns regarding the dire need of equipment for the MONG. Presently, the MONG need more four-drive vehicles and newer equipment to meet its role demanding roles at home assisting with disasters or providing Agribusiness Development Team to work with Afghan farmers to improve their regional agriculture and business infrastructure.

Military Legislative Issues

Review of proposed legislation

Bill Description	
SB27 Brown (S16)	Allows spouses who leave employment to follow their military spouses in the event of a military transfer, to qualify for unemployment compensation

SB34 Stouffer (S21)	Allows spouses who leave employment to follow their military spouses in the event of a military transfer, to qualify for unemployment compensation
SB78 Brown (S16)	Extends the sunset on the military family relief fund income tax check-off from August 28, 2011, to December 31, 2017
HB79 Nolte (033)	MILITARY MEDALLIONS AND MEDALS Authorizes the issuance of a military medallion, medal, and certificate to certain veterans who served in specified conflicts regardless of whether they are or ever were legal Missouri residents Fisher (125) , et al
HB136 Day (148)	MILITARY SPOUSES Allows the spouse of certain active military members to be eligible for unemployment benefits and to receive a temporary courtesy license to practice his or her occupation or profession in this state
HB149 Day (148)	MISSOURI MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF FUND Extends the expiration date of the provisions regarding the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund to December 31, 2017, and the termination date of the provisions to September 1, 2018.
HB150 Webber (023)	COMPENSATION FOR STATE EMPLOYEES Requires a Missouri state employee to be compensated an amount equal to the difference between his or her military compensation and state salary when the military leave of absence exceeds 120 hours Kander (044) , et al
HB204 Hoskins (121)	DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWALS (0139L.01P) Allows a resident who is on active military duty to

	renew his or her expired driver's license without a complete examination if the renewal is made within a specified time from discharge or residency Largent (120) , et al
HB238 Kander (044)	UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS Allows a spouse of an active member of the United States Armed Forces or reservist on active duty to be eligible for unemployment benefits if accompanying the military spouse in the event of a military move. Fisher (125) , et al
HB 303 Day (148)	COURTESY PROFESSIONAL LICENSES Requires any state agency or board that regulates an occupation or profession to establish rules for the issuance of a courtesy license to a nonresident spouse of certain active duty military members Lampe (138) , et al
HB 368 Meadows (101)	VETERAN IDENTIFICATION CARDS Requires the Missouri Veterans Commission to issue an identification card to each veteran in the state who applies and provides proof of his or her military service Kratky (065) , et al
HB611 Holsman (045)	NIGHT SKY PROTECTION ACT Establishes the Night Sky Protection Act to reduce the amount of light emitted into the night sky to near natural levels for designated military training areas Atkins (075) , et al
HJR 11 Nolte	Liberty Memorial Urges the Congress to designate the Liberty Memorial at the National Museum in Kansas City as the National World War I Memorial.

HJR 30 Wyatt	Adopting one new section in lieu thereof relating to property tax exemptions for veterans.
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Discussion continued about 2011 legislative issues effecting military personnel and their families.

Other Business

Cindy Hall, Sen. McCaskill's Office thanked the Chairman and the members of the MMPEC for their dedication and stated she appreciated being included and working with MMPEC.

Next Meeting

Chairman Wright scheduled the next Commission meeting for Wednesday, March 16th in the DED Conference Room-Room 680 Truman Building, Jefferson City beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Adjourn

With no further business Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Bloemker seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion approved. Chairman Dalton Wright called the January 13, 2010 meeting adjourned.

After lunch, several Commission members and Advisory Members visited legislative members of the Senate and House Veterans Committees along with leadership members in the House and Senate.

Minutes Approved:

Chairman Dalton Wright

Date