

**Minutes**  
**July 19, 2017**  
**Executive Committee**

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Military Base Task Force convened on July 19, 2017, at 2 PM at the BB&T Building in Columbia.

A notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The following people were in attendance: William L. Bethea, Jr. (Chairman), Charlie Farrell (Executive Coordinator), Dan Beatty (Columbia), Steve Creech (Sumter), Col Ronnie Taylor (SCNG), Scott Jaillette, Haidee Stith, Allison Caldwell and Sandy Claypoole (Program Manager). Jim Wegmann (Beaufort joined by phone).

Bill Bethea called the meeting to order.

Charlie Farrell introduced Chris Brathwaite from WLTX.

Allison Caldwell gave an update on the new website by showing us the test website. A few modifications are left to do and the plan is to go live by the end of July. A discussion followed about keeping the website fresh and the types of information we would post.

Charlie Farrell thanked all the members of the team who worked so diligently on the Economic Impact Study, Strategic Plan, and the new website.

Steve Creech encouraged monthly review of the website. Bill said Sandy Claypoole and Allison Caldwell will have that responsibility.

**Reports from Communities**

***Jim Wegmann, Beaufort:***

There were two change of commands at the air station. They were the Base Commander and the Commanding Office of VMFAT-501. LHD, Marine Corps Landing Pad, for the F-35B has recently been certified. Other aircraft will be certified such as the Osprey and helicopters.

***Charlie Farrell (for Mary Graham), Charleston:***

At the Association of Defense Communities National Summit in Washington D.C., Charleston was selected as one of the Eight Great Defense Communities. Col. Lyman, Base and Wing Commander at Joint Base Charleston, was one of two recipients of a national leadership award. Col. Lyman recently stepped down and is heading to Ft. Bragg to be Director of Communications for the Joint Special Operations Command.

***Dan Beatty, Fort Jackson:***

Chief of Staff of the Army, General Milley, came to Fort Jackson to help celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> year. Fort Jackson is right at maximum capacity for training. Major General Malcolm Frost, Commanding General, Center for Initial Military Training, is visiting Fort Jackson to get a better understanding of the training. Several changes of command have occurred recently – Garrison Commander, Training Brigade Commander, Chief of Staff, and the Army Chaplain's School.

Reserves are focused on "Fight Tonight." Readiness is the number one concern for reserve forces across the nation. The "Fight Tonight" concept originated with the Eighth Army on the Korean Peninsula.

***Steve Creech, Sumter***

One squadron is at Nellis at Red Flag. Two more squadrons are to follow in the next 45 days. Environmental Impact Study is still in progress for the Reaper, to bed down after the first of the year.

Big ORI, Operational Rediness Inspection, taking place the first week of August. Ops tempo at a fast pace.

ARCENT numbers are down because there are lots of folks in Kuwait. Only 500 personnel are in the building.

USAF would like to have a BRAC on their own, but want to increase the total number of personnel.

***Col Ronnie Taylor, USNG***

Strength of Guard is authorized to increase from 9067 to 9267. They are expected to be there by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Guard added cyber battalion headquarters and a transportation company. Signal Brigade has returned from the Middle East.

Blackhawks are back home as well. 678<sup>th</sup> ADA Brigade is doing a change of responsibility and turning over the national capitol region to another state. MP Company is currently in Guantanamo and will be back in August. 151 ARB unit will deploy to Afghanistan with 229 personnel for 9 months. Firefighters left for Poland. 742<sup>nd</sup> is currently in Poland and Romania. 2-238 Company of Chinooks is going to Afghanistan. 2-263 ADA is Battalion Maintenance Company is going to the national capitol region. Engineers are going back and forth to Romania and Poland. A battery of 263<sup>rd</sup> ADA is deploying to Europe.

F-16s are in the Pacific area. 218<sup>th</sup> MEB had a change of command.

2005 BRAC committee visited McEntire to observe results from the 2005 BRAC. McEntire went from 15 F-16s to 24 F-16s. They wanted to identify what was good and what was bad from the 2005 BRAC. The final report will be on the GAO website in March of 2018. A discussion also focused on where McEntire F-16s came from. They came from Mountain Home AFB.

### ***Jim Wegmann***

The 2005 BRAC committee also visited MCAS Beaufort. They focused on the VMAT-501 F-35B squadron's move from Eglin AFB to MCAS Beaufort.

Bill Bethea gave a background on planning for the military. Most planning in years past was done by the local communities. Communities still plan but saw the need for a state-wide strategic plan that would help the communities from a state perspective. Economic Impact Study was completed in 2017 showing a \$24.1 billion impact. Last fall the Executive Committee participated in a strategic planning workshop. Haidee Stith was engaged to put the strategic plan together.

### ***Haidee Stith***

Haidee travelled around the state interviewing community and military leaders. With so much information it was decided that each community would have its own individual report with recommendations. The state plan has overall objectives and goals and the community reports will have more detail. There will also be some one to two page Issue Briefs that will help the public better understand the issues, such as BRAC. All of these will be accessible on the website. The goal is to enhance the value of the military in South Carolina and prove that our installations are strategically and economically important.

There are four main goals:

1. Establish a new operation structure for the SC Military Base Task Force.
2. Protect and grow South Carolina's military assets.
3. Improve the quality of life for military families and retirees.
4. Support veterans and retirees services and benefits through a unified structure.

Many other states have one or more tools in terms of financial assistance to the military, either public/private assistance, state grants, or actual appropriations.

Real ID issue was of major concern at all installations.

Steve Creech said you can register now for Real ID. DMV will take your information. When Real ID becomes available in the fall, DMV will notify you.

Quality of public education is a major concern of all commanders.

The strategic plan is a work in progress and changes can be made as we move forward.

Steve Creech moved for the adoption of the strategic plan. It was unanimously approved.

Bill Bethea thanked everyone who was a part of the process, including Jack Klimp and Warren Parker who led our workshops on strategic planning. We now have a good road map. The challenge now is to implement it. It is a living document that we need to constantly monitor and change as necessary.

Haidee will send out drafts of each community report and continue to edit until approved.

A matrix of the goals will also be provided so we will know responsibilities and timing.

Bill Bethea mentioned the need for committees, such as education and many other areas. We will draw upon the expertise of the MBTF members and others who can help.

Steve Creech recommended at least an annual formal review of the Strategic Plan and progress. Steve also believes that education has been the biggest drawback for military installations in South Carolina for years. The perception is that there are poor schools in South Carolina. Six hundred sixty students are homeschooled at Shaw AFB. Lots of folks opt out for private schools. Some in the military don't want to be assigned to SC because of the schools. In Sumter, two school districts were consolidated which will help Shaw AFB. What can we do to change the perception and to lift us up?

Bill Dukes has resigned as CASA, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army.

Steve Creech says we need to spend more time educating the General Assembly. We also need to spend more time in the Greenville area, as they are starting to be bigger players in defense contractors.

Bill Bethea says we are starting to get out to Rotary Clubs and other places to spread the word about the military.

The National Guard and Reserve can be a big help as they are in every community. Ronnie Taylor says his efforts are underway to get legislators involved in local events.

Jim Wegmann mentioned the Defense Communities Caucus in Washington. Beaufort has sent a letter to Congressman Sanford urging him to join.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM.

