

Minutes

April 19, 2017

Full SC Military Base Task Force Meeting

Joint Base Charleston

A meeting of the full Task Force convened at 10:30 am at the Charleston Club on Joint Base Charleston.

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

There were over 70 people in attendance. Executive Committee Members present were William L. Bethea, Jr. (Chairman), Charlie Farrell (Executive Coordinator), Mary Graham (Charleston), Steve Creech (Sumter), Dan Beatty (Columbia) and M. Gen. Van McCarty (on behalf of M. Gen. Robert Livingston).

Chairman Bethea called the meeting to order and welcomed all guests. He introduced Maj. Gen. James Livingston (Medal of Honor Recipient), Lt. Gen. (Ret) Jack Klimp, Maj. Gen. (Ret) George Goldsmith, Mary Graham (Charleston), Steve Creech (Sumter), Dan Beatty (Columbia), Maj. Gen. Van McCarty, Lt. Gen. (Ret) Roger Thompson, Col. Mark Shade, Kim Statler (SCDOC), Charlie Farrell (Executive Coordinator), Sandy Claypoole and Col. Rob Lyman (Commander, Joint Base Charleston).

Col. Rob Lyman welcomed everyone to Joint Base Charleston.

Charlie Farrell introduced Jeff Wilkinson with The State and Brenda Ridge with The Post and Courier.

Reports from Military Communities:

Bill Bethea – Beaufort

- Marine Corp Air Station continues expansion, improvements and training on the F-35s.
- \$67 million to be spent on an F-35 maintenance hangar, \$6.6 million cybergenics facility, \$18 million upgrading jet fuel storage capacity.
- Parris Island to upgrade their rifle range.
- New power plant and solar system investment of \$92 million.
- Naval Hospital continues to expand their services.
- Blue Angels coming to Beaufort. Open to the public.

Mary Graham – Charleston

- Signed P4 initiative for consolidated 911 system with Charleston County, one of the first in the country.
- Involved with State House regarding traffic issues and infrastructure funding.
- Defense contractors hosted Representative Sanford to discuss community concerns.
- Chosen 1 of 8 Great American Defense Communities by the Association of Defense Communities. Honor bestowed in Washington, D.C. at National Summit, June 18-21, 2017.

Dan Beatty – Columbia

- Thanks to SCNG for support at presidential inauguration and ongoing support for security in our nation's capital.

- McEntire Air Ground Expo, 6th and 7th of May.
- Fort Jackson's Centennial Celebration continues with various events and distinguished visitors coming in.
- Expansion of training at Fort Jackson with standup of 11th Battalion.
- Lots of commanders leaving this summer, including Gen. Rick Neuberding, Commanding Officer of the Soldiers Support Institute.

Steve Creech – Sumter

- Squadron coming home in May and another deployment in fall.
- Ops tempo steady and strong at Shaw.
- Ribbon cutting for new hospital clinic, 111,000 sq. feet, consolidating three buildings into one.
- Salute From the Shore July 4th at 1:00. F-16s fly from upper end of SC to Hilton Head, followed by vintage aircraft.
- Economic Impact Study ongoing for arrival of the Reaper. Personnel start arriving in October.

Maj Gen Van McCarty – SC National Guard

- Air Show at McEntire 6th and 7th of May, plus concert.
- \$15 million in new state dollars. \$30 million deferred maintenance deficit.
- New field maintenance storage facility, \$12 million, at Donaldson Center. \$21 million Readiness Center coming online. Partnering with Joint Base Charleston to build new Readiness Center for the Summerville Armory, \$17.5 million investment.

- 400 soldiers and airmen deployed overseas.
- Not successful with latest round of F-35s but still working the issue.

Kim Statler, Workforce Advisor for Department of Commerce in Beaufort, spoke. Since 2011, over 80,000 new jobs. Challenge is to fill those positions. Separating military is a tremendous source of skilled workers. One of the partners of Commerce is TWEAC (Transitional Workforce Education Assistance) in Beaufort that helps bridge the gap. TWEAC set up a military tent at the Blue Angels show.

Bill Bethea gave an overview of the updated economic impact, new strategic plan, and new website. VPAC, Veterans Policy Advisory Committee has been moved from the legislature to the Military Base Task Force. Mission is to study veterans issues.

Dan Beatty gave an update on the Economic Impact Study, which is posted on our website, www.scmilitarybases.org. We included inputs to the study we did not count before, such as Corps of Engineers and Savannah River Site. Did a regional approach, not just installation approach. Conducted extremely conservative analysis of defense contractors. 57,000 retirees in SC which bring in 1.6 billion dollars. 417,000 veterans in SC which bring in 1.9 billion dollars. Introduced Leanne Weldin from the VA. SC number 10 in the country with DoD service members. SC number 9 in the country in retiree population. Budget Control Act had a negative

impact on our final numbers – 24.1 billion dollars. Steve Creech added that SC is not competitive because we do not fully exempt military retirement income.

Charlie Farrell gave a Financial Literacy Test and then gave an overview of the federal budgeting process with emphasis on discretionary spending, mandatory spending, and payment on the debt. He also covered where the money comes from – taxes, etc. and where the money goes. The shortfall each year, the deficit, is covered by borrowing, which adds to the federal debt. He then discussed continuing resolution and sequestration and how that affects the military.

Dan Beatty showed a video featuring Representative Joe Wilson and Gen. Milley talking about the effect of sequestration on the military and what happens when congress does not pass a budget. Three options: 1. Pass a budget, 2. Pass a continuing resolution, 3. Shut down the government.

MajGen (Ret) James E. Livingston, Medal of Honor Recipient

- South Carolina has done a great job in preparing the economic impact study and strategic plan.
- Suggestions:
 1. Create a legitimate veterans' organization for the state

2. Look at all the administrative pieces that effect veterans and start a consolidation under one person. Have a Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
3. Make these things happen legislatively.

Power is in the numbers; 500,000 veterans in the state represents a powerful voting block. Power is also in the economic impact – 24 billion dollars. People in South Carolina are not aware of these numbers. Newspapers should give more coverage to the military and the activities of the veterans. Take the strategic plan to Washington and fight for what SC needs to support the military. Each district of the state should have its own strategic plan. Take the initiative to improve the schools, especially around military bases. First thing military folks look at is the schools.

Formal meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Lunch followed.

After lunch a tour of the flight line and a C-17.

