



Washington National Guard Support To Combatant Commanders – Post 9/11/01

NORTHCOM / USJFCOM

WADS / 1Air Force,
Operation Jump Start (AZ)

SOUTHCOM

Columbia

EUCOM

United Kingdom,
Germany, Serbia,
Kosovo, Spain,
Italy, Diego Garcia,
Azores, Greece

CENTCOM

Iraq, Afghanistan,
Turkey, Kyrgyzstan,
Saudi Arabia, Kuwait,
Qatar, Djibouti
United Arab Emirates

PACOM

Thailand, South Korea,
Japan, Guam, Philippines

Operation Iraqi Freedom: Over 4,700 ARNG Over 1,700 ANG 2,300+ ARNG currently in Iraq
Operation Enduring Freedom: Over 500 ARNG Over 175 ANG
Many have served multiple tours.

Washington National Guard men and women are on duty daily all around the world

Deployment Cycle Support Priorities

- Expedite connection to VA Compensation and Benefits
- Provide immediate connection to Health Care Benefits
- Develop new employment opportunities for all members
 - National Guard make up changed fundamentally in 2006 – now comprised of over 50% “first term” members
 - **Younger, less experience, fewer networking skills**
 - Returning members face unique challenges to employment

Seattle VARO response

- Director met early & extensively with WNG
 - focused on providing service
- Deputy Director provided key input and guidance on first MOU in US
- External Affairs Manager worked to create first in nation BDD for Guard & Reserve
 - Reduced claim processing from average 192 days to 79 days
 - Significantly reduced wait time for VR & E

Why is this important

- 2006 Study by ESD indicates 1/2 of Army Guard members (E-6 and below) earn less \$24,627 per year (new study underway to update \$ amount)
- HUD VLIL for family of two = 26,750
- Projected unemployed population of Washington's current deployed brigade = 1,200
 - 800 members worked full time Active Duty Prior to Deployment.
 - History indicates an additional 400 will not have jobs to return to because of business closures or personal reasons

Soldier Challenges to Employment

- Lack of knowledge on how to get certification for military training/experience
- Inexperience translating military skills to the civilian environment
- Contrasts between military and civilian employment - work responsibility – group discipline VS self discipline
- Mission Focus = lack of in-depth future planning including training potential and career exploration.
- Minimal coping skills, stress management, and specific techniques for reducing reactions to trauma based experiences.
- Dealing with family dynamic changes, and renegotiating new roles and behaviors.
- Building new support systems – often find jobs lost due to a shrinking economy, or changes in the work place.

A Proven Prototype

- United Association initiated program with WA National Guard to train members in the Piping Profession
- 16 week “basic training” course prior to entering apprenticeship – no prior experience
- UA paid cost of training for 16 individuals @ \$15,000 per trainee
- Generated frequent contact with employers prior to graduation to ensure placement

How Successful?

- Course began with 16 students
- Graduation scheduled for 18 Dec 2008
- 9 students accelerated graduation, began apprenticeship 1 December 2008
- 7 accelerated graduation, began apprenticeship on 13 December
- ALL STUDENTS GRADUATED EARLY

Why it Works

- Pre-screen applicants using World of Work Inventory & Employment Readiness Scale
- Pre-determine financial resource requirements prior to entering training
- Provide unique training prior to course work to address individual challenges to employment – Training for Your Tomorrow, Today!
- Utilize all partners – WDVA, ESD with prominent roles

Next Steps

- Next Pilot Program – “Project 100”
 - 10 Unions, 10 apprenticeships each
- Includes Community and Technical Colleges
 - Develop certification programs – short term boot camp to complete certification – computer repair, automotive, etc
- Goal to emulate UA Plan
 - Develop “basic training” to be safe entering apprenticeship
 - Basic training not to exceed 16 weeks
 - Provide Training For Your Tomorrow Today
 - Use union and business resources to fund training

What do we need to succeed?

- Expand Unemployment Insurance to 39 weeks for returning members
- Authorize Commissioner Approved Training (CAT) during all phases of post mobilization job search
- Liberalize use of new GI Bill to authorize payment during certification boot camps and “basic training” for apprenticeships
- Provide tax incentives to contractors and employers who support enhanced employment of Guard and Reserve Members

Gulf War Vets?

- How many?
- Where do they live?
- What is the mean income?
- How is their health?
- What current VA Benefits are they receiving?
- Must know who the target population is!

Gulf War Vets - Employment

- Create window for physical and mental exam at no charge at VAMC – determine readiness for employment
 - Provide service through Vet Center when warranted
- Create opportunity to review/revisit VA Claims
- GI Bill Education Benefits expired.
 - Create Grant & Per Diem
 - 1 time grant up to \$1,000 for certifications
 - Per Diem of \$2,000 per month for up to 5 months
- Create tax incentive to employers to hire
- Provide DOL financial incentives to states with best improvement of Gulf War Vets mean income

Gulf War Vets - Imperatives

- VA can not do it alone
- All state and federal agencies have vested interest
- All are trained in protecting personal data
- Partner with DOL/VETS to create programs
- State Employment Security to direct
- State Departments of Veterans Affairs primary partner in providing local resources – VSO, etc

World of Work Inventory (WOWI) cont'd

- The *WOWI* combines information about a client's subjectively selected educational and occupational choices
 - Objectively assessed preferences for particular job duties
 - Aptitudes and achievement in various areas
 - Preferences for particular qualities of the work environment

What Is the ERS?

A web-based self-assessment tool that:

- measures client's employment readiness
- predicts employment outcomes
- documents client's needs
- supports practitioners in their work with clients
- assesses intervention effectiveness

Training for Your Tomorrow, Today!

- Contrasts between military and civilian work behaviors and patterns.
- In-depth exploration of future planning - training potentials and career exploration.
- Coping skills, stress management, reducing reactions to trauma based experiences.
- Dealing with family dynamic changes, renegotiating new roles and behaviors.
- Building new support systems – to facilitate achieving a better tomorrow.