

**Ombudsman Program Advisory Group  
Minutes – October 17, 2007  
Naval Services FamilyLine**

The meeting was called to order at 1310. Members in attendance were:

Mrs. Josi Hunt, CNO Ombudsman-at-Large  
Mrs. Diana Campa, CNO Ombudsman-at-Large  
Mrs. Kip Route, CNO Ombudsman-at-Large (Out-going)  
Mrs. Sue Genie, COMNAVRESFOR Senior Spouse Advisor  
Ms. Pat Nicholson, Family Support Program Manager, COMNAVRESFOR  
Ms. Christine Degraw, CNIC FFSP Program Analyst  
Mrs. Doreen Scott, CNIC FFSP Program Analyst  
Mrs. Pat Johnson, CNIC FFSP/IT, Training and Management Analyst  
Mr. Ed Roscoe, Management IT, Training Analyst  
Ms. Marcia Hagood, Personal Family Readiness, by phone

Members not in attendance were:

CDR Rhetta Ray Bailey, Command Leadership School  
FORCM Kevin Blade, CNIC  
Ms. Cathy Stokoe, Family Readiness Program Manager, CNIC

The meeting was opened by welcoming two new members – Mrs. Josi Hunt, newly appointed Chairman of Naval Services FamilyLine and CNO Ombudsman-at-Large, and Mrs. Sue Genie, COMNAVRESFOR Senior Spouse Advisor. We look forward to working with both of you in providing support to our Navy Ombudsmen and Navy families.

A request for an addition to the agenda, to discuss the re-instatement of Fleet, Force and Regional Ombudsman was received. VADM Conway and MCPON Campa asked that the discussion be tabled until an assessment of the impact of an instruction change can be made.

The Ombudsman Program POA&M was reviewed and action status updated item by item. Specific discussion topics were:

- The Ombudsman DVD has been sent to all Certified Ombudsman Trainers (COTs) to be used while teaching Ombudsman Basic Training (OBT).
- An OPAG member questioned whether COTs were regularly evaluated to ensure standardized and effective training. An explanation of the training process was given with the assurance that quality assurance visits are now taking place and will continue throughout the regions to monitor both the trainer, and the training materials. An error report is available for COTs to use to report any corrections that are identified within the training materials.

- We have approximately 169 Certified Ombudsman Trainers CONUS and OCONUS.
- Ombudsman Appreciation events – several OPAG members were guest speakers at Ombudsman Appreciation events last month.
- Numerous PAO ads and stories were published honoring ombudsmen for Ombudsman Appreciation. A four week ad was placed in Navy Times using real ombudsmen.

The Region Southeast Ombudsman Symposium, held in Jacksonville, FL in September 2007, was widely attended by ombudsmen, command leadership and senior leadership spouses. Topics included Disaster Preparedness, Ombudsman Registry, and Running Your Ombudsman Program.

The third issue of the IA Family Connections Newsletter has just been released. This N/L is posted on the FFSP website, the NKO website and is widely circulated among ombudsmen and IA POCs. In addition to current information and resources for IA spouses and family members, the newsletter lists a schedule of virtual IA family support meetings.

Virtual IA Family Support meetings are being held every Friday evening. A schedule can be found in the IA Family Connection Newsletter each month and online at the FFSP website. The meetings are being well-received, and it is hoped that participation will increase as the word is further disseminated.

IA Family and Spouse support continue to be a major concern. FamilyLine received a letter indicating that support for Reserve spouses needs improvement. It was noted that 1000 spouses who were part of an Army Brigade received no contact at all. It was questioned whether we had ombudsman at every NOSC and does NFAAS include reserve families? How does ECRC collect the data? Reserve members are now being included into NFAAS. Most NOSCs have ombudsmen but have not registered in the Registry. Also noted were Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and Expeditionary Training Teams (ETT), units which bring in people from all over the country. They are not a unit but individuals brought together to form a unit. CNIC will forward questions to ECRC.

OPAG members are interested in receiving NFAAS training. This will be arranged as soon as possible. CNIC has for action.

Ombudsmen would like a standardized response to give when they accept a call that may be a reportable. The verbiage would define which topics are reportable, and offer resources if someone needs them. It was noted that the reportables are different for non-activated Reserve families so this will have to be considered when writing this response. CNIC has for action.

CNIC plans to develop standardized Advanced Trainings for Domestic Violence, and IA Family Needs, Resources and Realistic R&R Expectations. These Advanced Trainings will be required for ombudsmen. We also plan to offer a Monthly Town Hall meeting for

ombudsmen through webinar. Updates will be provided at the next meeting. CNIC has for action.

Reserve OBT includes additional information pertinent to Reserves. All COTs need this training in case they have Reserve ombudsmen in their OBT classes. If they have several Reserve ombudsmen, they may choose to teach it to the entire class. Otherwise, they may choose to teach it one on one with the Reserve ombudsman. CNIC has for action.

The Navy Reserve markets their Ombudsman Program through a bi-monthly newsletter, Plan of the Month and emails sent to all ombudsmen. They offer Town Hall meetings through a Community of Practice.

A Command Tool Kit is being developed for the Ombudsman Program. This will be issued primarily to COs, XO's and CMC/COBs while attending their Command Leadership course. The tool kit will include items such as:

- A Welcome Letter
- Orientation Checklist for Ombudsmen
- Ombudsman Brochure
- Fact Sheets on:
  - Recognizing ombudsmen
  - Selecting ombudsmen
  - Reimbursing ombudsmen
  - Ombudsman Role in Disaster/Crisis
  - Ombudsman Monthly Reports - privacy issues/who sees the reports?

The tool kit will be made available on CD and posted on the FFSP website and Navy Reserve website. CNIC has for action.

Regional Ombudsman Advisory Boards have begun meeting. At this time they only will provide a report to CNIC if there is an issue that needs to be addressed. OPAG requested that they report regardless of the situation. CNIC will relay that request to the regions. CNIC has for action.

A recurring issue is the reimbursement of ombudsmen. A survey has been sent out to all ombudsmen registered in the Ombudsman Registry discussing reimbursement practices at their command. So far over 400 ombudsmen have responded. The overall response has been positive, but some issues have been disclosed. Final results will be discussed at the next OPAG meeting.

Ombudsmen are required to complete OBT within six weeks of their appointment. When this is not possible, an OBT Orientation has been developed to fill the void, covering the most important topics of OBT. This training will not replace OBT, and all ombudsmen will still be required to attend the standardized OBT course. The orientation training will be beta tested with newly appointed ombudsmen in November. Zeiders will do the initial trainings and then the training will be turned over to CNIC to provide, possibly through the Regions.

We currently have 5400 commands registered on the Ombudsman Registry. Four hundred sixty-one ombudsmen are assigned, and 800 COs have registered. The registry is in the process of being revised in keeping with the expected migration to CNIC's portal. With the new system, registration and assignment can be done in one step, making the entire process more user friendly for commands. A beta test will be performed sometime in January/February 2008.

OPAG members would like to see the monthly reports that ombudsmen submit. We agreed to review these at every other OPAG meeting. CNIC has for action.

Reserve personnel asked to be given Ombudsman Coordinator access in order to see who has registered in their AOR. They also want to see who the designated representative for their TYCOM is. CNIC has for action.

A draft revision has been written for the FRG instruction. Fund-raising seems to be the most common issue among commands. Mrs. Route asked that we send the draft to RADM McDonald for his review. CAPT Herold and LCDR Luciano received a copy of the draft for a courtesy review. CAPT Herold has said that LCDR Luciano works for RADM MacDonald - Therefore Mrs. Route's requests has been met. The CNIC Program Manager has been provided the appropriate coordination list for submission/edits to this instruction.

The Ombudsman Coordinator Desk Guide is underway – the working group met in San Diego after the War Time Deployment Conference. Zeiders will write the desk guide in accordance with their original contract. They will identify the staff who will be working on the project in January. Our intent is to provide the contractor with as much information as possible, to ensure a product that will reflect our needs.

Reserve Ombudsmen have a challenge in attending OBT. There are currently approximately 2700 unit ombudsmen unable to attend training due to an average cost of \$1250.00 per ombudsman. We need to “think outside the box” for alternate methods of training for these ombudsmen. Suggestions include: Online training, webinars, assigning mentors to follow the new ombudsman for six months, and being certified by the Commanding Officer after they are trained. It is desired that the 125 NOSC ombudsmen still attend the traditional OBT training, although sending an ombudsman to this training takes money away from supporting a reservist.

The Marine Corps has a three-phase approach to training that we need to research and see if it can be applied to these NOSC ombudsmen. We will need to receive clarification on how to approach this training – will Zeiders do it or will NETC do it under the new instruction? Pat and CNIC will report back to the OPAG on possible ways to manage this situation. CNIC has for action.

San Diego is being considered for the next Ombudsman Trainers' Symposium, tentatively scheduled for May 13 – 15, 2008. Chris will submit a request for proposals through the Visitor's Convention Bureau. CNIC has for action.

The next OPAG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 16, 2008, at 1300, at Naval Services FamilyLine.

A fond farewell and deeply felt thank you were given to Kip Route, out-going Ombudsman-at-Large, for all of her hard work with the OPAG and the Ombudsman Program. Thank you, Kip, best of luck to you in your future endeavors. We also extend a farewell to Deborah Mullen as she and her husband move on to their new assignment, and to Janet Passmore as she and her husband retire from military service.

The meeting adjourned at 1535.