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IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM——POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF A NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM ON MILITARY RECRUITMENT

TRIP REPORT TO

THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TRIP REPORT

APRIL 12–13, 1993

PARRIS ISLAND, SC, FT. JACKSON, SC, FT. BENNING, GA

IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM——POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF A NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM ON MILITARY RECRUITMENT

Congressman G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Vice-Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, led a delegation on April 12–13, 1993, which visited three military training sites: Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), Parris Island, South Carolina; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; and Fort Benning, Georgia. The purpose of the trip was to observe the implementation and effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program, and also to determine the possible effects of a national service program on military recruitment.

Mr. Montgomery was accompanied on the site visits by the following members of the Committee on Veterans Affairs: Hon. Tim Y. Hutchinson (R-AR), Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee on Education, Training, and Employment, Hon. James E. Clyburn (D-SC), Hon. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (D-GA), and Hon. Floyd Spence (R-SC).

The delegation also included MG William A. Navas, Jr., Military Executive, Reserve Forces Policy Board and the following representatives of national veterans' organizations: Mr. Michael B. Prothero, Adjutant General, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Mr. Robert Jones, National Executive Director, AMVETS; Mr. John Hanson, Director of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, The American Legion; Mr. Ronald W. Drach, National Employment Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Kenneth Steadman, Director, National Security and Foreign Affairs, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The following representatives of military associations were also represented on this trip: MG Robert F. Ensslin, Executive Director, National Guard Association; Col. Frank A. Edens (Ret.), Director, Army Affairs, Reserve Officers Association; Col. William Hart (Ret.), Deputy Director for Government Relations, Retired Officers Association; Col. Erik Johnson (Ret.), Director of Legislative Affairs, Association of the U.S. Army; Col. Charles C. Partridge (Ret.), Legislative Counsel, National Association for Uniformed Services; Mr. Richard Johnson, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Non-Commissioned Officers Association; and General Monroe Hatch (Ret.), Executive Director, Air Force Association.

The delegation included the following House and Senate staff members: Mr. Mack Fleming, Chief Counsel and Staff Director, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Ms. Jill Cochran, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Education, Training, and Employment, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Ms. Winsome Packer, Professional Staff Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Mr. James Holley, Director of Public Affairs, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Eugene Brickhouse, Professional Staff Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Kingston Smith, Minority General Counsel, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Charles F. Lee, Associate Counsel, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and Mr. Yelberton Watkins, Legislative Counsel/Legislative Assistant, office of Rep. James Clyburn.

Department of Defense (DOD) representatives included LTC John Molino, Legislative Liaison, and Mr. Robert Stein, Director, Transition Support and Services. Mr. Richard Maze, Congressional Correspondent for the *Army Times*, was also a member of the delegation.

Established as a pilot program in May, 1990, the Transition Assistance Program is jointly administered by the Departments of Labor, Veterans Affairs and Defense. Public Law 101–510 (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991) established TAP as a full-scale program now implemented in all 50 states. Under the program, service members within 180 days of separation from active duty in the Armed Forces are provided transition counseling, job-search training and information, placement assistance, and benefits counseling to aid in their transition to civilian life. Demand for the three-day TAP workshops has been high. Participants are asked to evaluate the program at the end of their training and post-training surveys show that most have judged the TAP training to be very helpful.

The MGIB was enacted on October 19, 1984, and implemented on July 1, 1985. This educational assistance program was designed to facilitate veterans' readjustment to civilian life and to aid in the recruitment and retention of quality personnel in the Armed Forces. Participation rates among the branches of the armed services demonstrate that the MGIB is highly valued by young recruits entering active duty. Statistics show that during December, 1992, 92.6 percent of all eligible personnel elected enrollment in the program. Additionally, the GI Bill has proven to be a powerful, cost-effective recruitment and retention tool for the armed services. U.S. Army statistics show that the percentage of recruits who were high school diploma graduates nearly doubled after implementation of the GI Bill. The percentage of recruits scoring in the upper half of the Armed Forces Qualification Test soared as well after the MGIB was implemented.

The delegation also sought comments from members of the military community regarding the potential effect of a national service program on military recruitment. The Administration proposes to create a program to reward those who perform service in local communities with benefits for education or vocational training. The delegation sought to determine if, faced with the options of service in the local community or service in the Armed Forces, significant numbers of high-quality young people would choose the former if incentives, such as educational assistance benefits, were similar

under both options, thereby creating an adverse effect on military recruitment.

PARRIS ISLAND

The delegation first visited the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), Parris Island, South Carolina. The group was greeted by Major General Gene A. Deegan, Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot. General Deegan, who is also Commanding General of the Marine Corps's Eastern Recruiting Region, presented a briefing on recruiting activities for the eastern region, which includes 48.6 percent of the country, for fiscal years 1992–1993.

General Deegan first noted that all women Marine recruits are trained at Parris Island. He also pointed out that, in spite of the drawdown of the Armed Forces, the recruiting and contracting missions for the eastern region have increased significantly for fiscal year 1993 and that both missions are being met. He stated that, although the quality of recruits remains high at Parris Island, quality has declined somewhat during 1993. General Deegan presented statistics showing that the percentage of high school degree graduates entering on active duty declined from 99.0 percent in 1992 to 96.8 percent in 1993. For the Reserves, the percentage of high school graduates declined from 99.5 percent in 1992 to 98.1 percent during 1993. It was also pointed out that waiver categories, particularly at the district level, are increasing fairly significantly.

The delegation was told that the major issues affecting recruiting include: the attitudes of the eligible population, which is directly affected by advertising; the downsizing of the Armed Forces and related perceptions, which are also affected by advertising; the possibility of lifting the homosexual ban; and the proposed national service program.

General Deegan explained that recruits are briefed on the Montgomery GI Bill during their first three days at Parris Island. In the briefing, they are informed about eligibility requirements, enrollment procedures, the required basic pay reduction, entitlement, and other important aspects of the program. When Mr. Clyburn asked what reasons are given by recruits who opt out of the program, he was told that most say they cannot afford to give up the $1,200 basic pay reduction required to establish eligibility under the program. Mr. Clyburn suggested that the young people who choose to opt out of the program be recounseled regarding the benefits of the GI Bill 7 to 9 days later.

The delegation was told that recruiters, who are trained in San Diego, are provided a one-hour class on education benefits, including the MGIB. This is supplemented with a Product Knowledge Book containing further details regarding the GI Bill. Chairman Montgomery suggested that one hour of training is inadequate for those providing such vital information to military personnel and recommended that additional training be provided.

Next, the delegation met with a panel of recruiters to discuss the effectiveness of the MGIB as a recruitment/retention tool, the impact of reduced funding for advertising, and other issues affecting recruitment activities.

There was consensus among the recruiters that the Montgomery GI Bill is a major incentive for individuals to enlist. A Marine recruiter told the delegation that more time is required now to find quality applicants and that the number of high-quality applicants is declining. He noted that recruiters' workload has almost doubled during the past year and that recruiters must do twice the number of interviews in order to get the young people the military needs. The panel pointed out, however, that the increase in GI Bill benefits, which became effective on April 1, 1993, will help draw smart, responsible young people into the military. It was also noted that the GI Bill is attractive to parents and teachers—those who influence young men and women.

When asked by Mr. Bishop if the GI Bill is beneficial to minority and underprivileged recruits, the panel agreed that the program is useful to all recruits. It was also pointed out that the percentage of new recruits opting out of the GI Bill is higher at Parris Island than at the Marine Corps recruit training center in San Diego. The delegation was told that this situation is being studied.

The recruiters agreed that fewer dollars are now available for recruiting activities, and several noted that this is particularly troublesome on the local level. For example, a Marine Corps recruiter mentioned that he has a new College Fund to offer but no money to advertise its availability. A recruiter stated that, because of the reduction in forces, the public perception is that the military is not hiring and there is no advertising to correct this perception.

The recruiters who were familiar with the proposed national service program expressed concern that this program could create increased competition for potential recruits. There was concern that many young people would choose the national service alternative if the education benefits earned through participation in this program were greater than those provided to military personnel. One recruiter noted that military service demands a greater sacrifice and that those who choose the national service option should not be provided greater benefits than those serving in the Armed Forces. A Marine recruiter said that even if a national service program is restricted to 100,000 participants, military recruitment will be adversely affected. He went on to say that, if the increase in the MCIB basic pay reduction included in the Administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 1994 is enacted, young people in the military will, in effect, be funding benefits for young people who choose to plant trees under the national service program.

The delegation next observed a briefing to recruits regarding the MGIB program. The briefing was provided to approximately 60 recruits in their second day of training. Comprehensive and clear, the Drill Instructor reinforced each detail in his presentation by repeating his instructions and soliciting questions from the recruits. When asked by the instructor, most recruits raised their hands to indicate that they would enroll in the MGIB program. Additionally, all members of this class were either high school graduates or had earned GEDs.

Members of Congress were introduced to the group at the conclusion of the briefing and provided the opportunity to eat lunch with recruits from their states. This arrangement facilitated a more informal discussion with recruits.

Following lunch, the delegation was transported to a training site to observe rappelling activities.

FORT JACKSON

The delegation's next stop was the 120th Adjutant General Reception at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, where they were met by Major General Richard S. Siegfried, Commanding General. General Siegfried cited the merits of providing education benefits to military personnel, pointing to the intellectual and professional strides he had accomplished by taking advantage of his GI Bill benefits. (MG Siegfried entered the military as a private and subsequently earned four degrees.) General Siegfried added that at Fort Jackson, 93.5 percent of all eligible recruits enrolled in the MGIB during fiscal year 1992.

The delegation was informed that at Fort Jackson an education briefing is presented to all recruits during their second day of training. Recruits then go to the Personnel Affairs Branch, where they indicate their decision regarding GI Bill participation.

The delegation then observed a GI Bill briefing to a class of approximately 40 recruits in their second day of inprocessing. Recruits were provided the opportunity to ask questions at the conclusion of the briefing, and most indicated that they would elect to enroll in the program. Approximately 1/3 of this group indicated that they had attended college for some period of time.

In response to a question from Chairman Montgomery regarding the reasons that recruits disenroll from the Montgomery GI Bill, the briefing officer gave the following as commonly cited reasons: (1) cannot afford the basic pay reduction because of family responsibilities; (2) completed educational goals; (3) other financial plans available for college; and (4) not college-oriented. The education officer added that once a service member elects disenrollment from the program, he or she is automatically referred to counseling sessions with the Processing NCO, then the Senior Drill or First Sergeant, and, finally, the Company Commander. At the end of these sessions, approximately 60 percent of those who initially chose disenrollment elect to enroll in the program.

The delegation was told that the Army permits recruits with a spouse and two children to enter on active duty. Close to 50 percent of new recruits have at least one dependent.

The delegation then met with a panel of recruiters which represented all branches of service. Each member of the group expressed strong support for the MGIB as a very effective recruitment incentive that attracts high-quality young men and women to military service.

All members of the recruiter panel said the reduction in advertising funds had negatively affected their ability to recruit. The Air Force and Navy recruiters expressed concern that declining funds for advertising would impair their ability to draw quality individuals into the military. One recruiter stated that, because of the negative publicity surrounding the military, he and others are concerned that qualified young people might be discouraged from enlisting. Another recruiter said that the lack of promotional items had been more problematic than the reduction in national advertis-

ing. An Air Force recruiter noted that he is not receiving literature to distribute. An Army recruiter said he had no money to advertise the recent increase in GI Bill benefits.

When asked about the possible effect of a national service program on their ability to recruit high-quality young people, a Marine recruiter stated that he was concerned that a national service program would draw from the population targeted by military recruiters—high school graduates with college potential. An Air Force recruiter said he is having a harder time recruiting now and that a national service program could cut his market by one-half. A Navy recruiter stated that a national service program could cause the Navy to either lower the quality of the individuals it accepts or result in recruiters falling short of their mission goal.

In response to the discussion with recruiters, members of the delegation reiterated the importance of ensuring that a national service program not be designed in a way that will adversely affect military recruitment. Chairman Montgomery voiced strong concern regarding the continuing need for quality recruits in the Armed Forces. Congressman Clyburn noted that the President must fashion a national service program in such a way that it will not compete with the Armed Forces. Congressman Hutchinson emphasized that military service *is* national service. Congressman Bishop noted that the benefits provided under the GI Bill should be more generous than those provided under a national service plan.

The second day of the two-day trip began with breakfast at Ft. Jackson where Congressional members of the delegation had the opportunity to meet with service members from their states. Next, the delegation was briefed on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) at the Job Assistance Center, Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Through its Memorandum of Agreement with the State of South Carolina, the Department of Defense informs the State 180 days in advance of all military personnel returning to South Carolina. TAP workshops are facilitated through close cooperation between the State and DOD.

Through education, employment support, and marketing activities, the South Carolina Military Assistance Council also plays an important role in transition services to military separatees. Such services include employment assistance and benefits counseling, case management, TAP support, human resources programs, job fairs and the Interstate Job Bank.

Additional TAP sites include Shaw AFB, Parris Island Marine Air Station, and the Charleston Navy Base. Since the implementation of the TAP program, 151 workshops have been conducted at Fort Jackson; 15,421 participants have been served, including 9,509 retirees, 5,186 separatees, 294 spouses, and 432 individuals from other categories.

The delegation was concerned that combining the TAP and ACAP programs could result in a duplication of services. Employment Center personnel explained that the ACAP program enhanced the services provided through TAP and in no way reduces the effectiveness of TAP.

The delegation was told that 85 percent of those retiring at Ft. Jackson have gone through the TAP/ACAP training. When asked

if younger separatees were adversely affected by this in any way, the delegation was assured that the opportunity to go through TAP training is provided to all who request it. Additionally, the group was told that questionnaires are provided at all ACAP sites for those who are considering moving to South Carolina following their separation from active duty. These questionnaires then enable South Carolina Employment Service personnel to begin their efforts to help these individuals find employment. The delegation was impressed with this initiative and noted that it would helpful if all states adopted this approach.

The delegation was then taken to a transition site where separating individuals returning from overseas duty stations are counseled regarding separation procedures, benefits to which they may be entitled, and other useful information. The delegation observed a class being conducted for 15 service members recently returned from Germany and Panama. About 1/2 of the class indicated they had gone through the ACAP training. The delegation was disturbed by the comment of one individual who stated that he had not been allowed to take time off to go to the ACAP classes at his overseas base and asked that this situation be investigated.

FORT BENNING

The delegation's final stop was the 30th Adjutant General Reception Battalion, Fort Benning, Georgia, where they were greeted by the Commanding General, Major General Jerry A. White.

Enroute to the briefing site, General White told the delegation that 97 percent of Ft. Benning recruits are enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill. He stressed the importance of recruiting high-quality young men and women and noted the recent slight increase in the number of recruits in mental category IV. General White expressed concern about this trend and noted that the Army needs smart young people who can use sophisticated weapons. He also stated that it is important to remember that patriotism is an important reason for joining the military and cautioned against overselling the opportunity to learn job skills as a reason to enlist.

The delegation was next briefed on the history and purpose of Ft. Benning and One Station Unit Training. Following this briefing, the delegation proceeded to the 2/58 Infantry Training Battalion Dining Facility where the Members of Congress ate lunch with service members from their states.

The delegation then proceeded to Soldiers Plaza where they attended a Army Career Alumni Program briefing. Fort Benning serves as a regional center for ACAP/Transition services, conducting 50 ACAP classes annually. The program combines services from the military, the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Education, as well as business and industry. One hundred Chambers of Commerce and 296 local businesses are involved in the ACAP program in Georgia. It was pointed out to the delegation that ACAP's clients are military personnel and employers.

ACAP officials explained that the Georgia Department of Labor teaches courses of basic job search skills, while the Job Center furnishes other job search information. Clients are trained in job search techniques, offered counseling and referred for employment.

These services are supplemented by the Transition Bulletin Board, a program that makes applicants' resumes accessible to potential employers through computerized records.

A local official reported that the Georgia Department of Labor has 52 offices across the State and works closely with the military community to assist veterans in finding employment. He stated that 22 percent of all applicants placed are veterans, and that Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) have increased counseling activities for separating military personnel.

The delegation was told that an on-site teacher certification program, coordinated with two local colleges, will soon be established in Georgia, and the State is exploring the possibility of establishing a job retraining program.

The delegation then observed a TAP briefing for approximately 25 retirees and spouses. Most workshop participants indicated they intend to stay in the Columbus area. The TAP instructor explained that when soldiers apply for retirement at Fort Benning, they are automatically enrolled in TAP classes. Individuals separating for other reasons are also routinely scheduled for TAP workshops. She added that 70 percent of those using the program were within 6 months of retiring from the military. When questioned about the benefits of the TAP program, participants expressed strong appreciation for all TAP services.

The delegation concluded their visit to Fort Benning by meeting with a panel of recruiters to discuss issues affecting military recruiting. There was strong agreement among the recruiters that the MGIB is the greatest incentive for potential recruits to enlist. An Army recruiter told the group that 44 percent of recruits enlist for education benefits. An Air Force recruiter noted that the negative publicity generated by the drawdown of the Armed Forces has made parents reluctant to recommend that their children enter the Armed Forces. He pointed out that, when told about the GI Bill and Army College Fund, parents have a much more positive view of military service.

In response to a question regarding the effect of a national service program on their ability to recruit high-quality young people, a Navy recruiter said that, if incentives offered are comparable, it would be very difficult to convince young men and women to enter the Navy rather than participate in a national service program. He noted that he has already been asked about the availability of a national service program by potential recruits. An Army recruiter suggested that most young people would choose to stay home and participate in a national service program if the benefits offered under this program are comparable to those offered by the military. He added that a national service program would be yet another group competing for quality young people.

An Army recruiter informed the delegation that individuals with GEDs, rather than high school diplomas, must have 22 hours of college credit in order to be recruited by the Army. He suggested that young people with GEDs and fewer than the required 22 college credits but who score well on the ASVAB should be recruited rather than individuals in mental category IV who have high

school diplomas. The delegation agreed this recommendation should be considered.

CONCLUSIONS

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

The delegation believes that the Montgomery GI Bill is continuing to accomplish the purposes for which it was established. Recruits have available to them an excellent educational assistance program which will facilitate their readjustment to civilian life following military service. Additionally, the GI Bill has been a powerful, cost-effective recruitment and retention tool which has enabled the Armed Forces to recruit top quality personnel. In every meeting with recruiters, the delegation was told that the Montgomery GI Bill is the most important incentive recruiters have to offer smart young people who are college-oriented.

When asked about the proposed increase in the basic pay reduction required to establish eligibility under the MGIB included in the Administration's budget request, recruiters noted that an increase could result in (1) reduced program enrollment and (2) could be perceived as a reduction in benefits for military personnel used to fund a civilian national service program. The delegation agrees that an increase in the MGIB pay reduction is unacceptable.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is an effective program that provides useful information regarding job search techniques, benefits, resume writing, and other transition-related information. In post-training surveys, program participants have rated the training they received as excellent. The delegation is concerned, however, that the assistance currently provided may not be sufficient and should perhaps be expanded to include direct job-placement assistance for individuals when they reach their final destinations after separation from the Armed Forces.

NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

The delegation strongly believes that any national service program must be carefully structured so that it does not adversely affect the ability of the armed services to recruit high-quality young men and women. At every base visited by the delegation, recruiters emphasized that if incentives offered under a national service program are competitive with those earned through military service, the recruiting difficulties now being experienced will be significantly exacerbated.

Recruiters also raised the issue of equity relative to benefits which flow from national service and military service. They stressed that benefits earned by those who volunteer to serve in the Armed Forces, thereby subjecting themselves to the rigors, hazards, and discipline which are unique to military service, must be more generous than those earned by individuals who perform civilian duties in a national service program. The delegation fully concurs with this view.

FUNDING LEVELS FOR ARMED FORCES ADVERTISING

Almost without exception, recruiters who met with the delegation said that achieving their recruiting goals is becoming significantly more difficult. When asked what factors have contributed to the declining interest on the part of high-quality youth to enlist in the military, *recruiters named the reduction in money for both national and local advertising during this fiscal year as the most serious immediate problem.* Because of the widely publicized downsizing of the Armed Forces, young people and those who influence them think the services are not hiring. Additionally, military service is not viewed as a profession which offers career potential and job security. The delegation feels that only increased advertising can overcome these misperceptions. If the Armed Forces are to maintain the recruiting successes of recent years and continue to attract bright, responsible young people who will serve their country with honor and dedication, significantly increased funding for advertising must be provided.

DELEGATION MEMBERS' COMMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE

The following comments were received from some members of the delegation regarding the Montgomery GI Bill, the Transition Assistance Program, and issues affecting military recruitment:

TIM HUTCHINSON
3rd District, Arkansas

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April 19, 1993

The Honorable Sonny Montgomery, Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I wanted to respond to your letter of April 14 regarding my impressions of our CODEL trip to South Carolina and Georgia.

First of all I want to express how informative I thought this trip was. I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with our servicemen and women as well as get to know my colleagues on the committee and representatives of the veterans service organizations.

The trip left me with a number of impressions. The impact of Montgomery GI bill was certainly driven home. One particular woman stands out in my mind. She was a minority student who had spent three years at Henderson College in Arkansas. While she was there she was one of the school's student leaders and was obviously very bright. After three years in college she ran out of money. She considered her options and chose to pursue an opportunity with the United States Army. Now she is not only availing herself of the opportunities the Army has to offer, but she is investing in her educational future and intends to return to complete her education at Henderson College when her tour is complete.

A second impression, which is related to the first, is the impact of the proposed national service program on the military's ability to fulfill its recruitment requirements. I think it is essential that the committee provides oversight to ensure that no policy is enacted which would undermine the effectiveness of the Montgomery GI bill. For instance, a young person might questions why they should subject themselves to boot camp and the harsh realities of military life when they could simply perform community service in their own home town, all the while reaping the same educational benefits as those who join the military. Therefore, the impact on the military must be our prime concern as we debate the pros and cons of a national service programs. If our all volunteer military is going to survive, we must ensure the viability of the Montgomery GI bill.

A third issue I would raise is the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). As we downsize and realign our armed forces, I believe it is important that we provide all assistance possible to our servicemen and women who separate from the military. In speaking with armed forces

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personnel it was evident that those individuals serving at bases in the continental United States are receiving thorough TAP briefings on the help available to them. However, those serving at foreign bases do not appear to be receiving the same preparation. Obviously those facing separation upon their return from overseas are already at a disadvantage. They have not had the same type of opportunity to conduct a domestic job search as those serving in the states. I think it is important that Congress does all it can to ensure that those serving abroad are as adequately prepared as possible.

Although this next issue does not fall under the direct jurisdiction of our committee, I would like to mention the consistent, unanimous concern expressed by military commanders on the matter of homosexuals in the military. At all three locations -- Parris Island, Fort Jackson and Fort Benning, military leaders stressed what effect a change in the current policy would have on recruiting, discipline and morale.

Finally, I would like to say how much I enjoyed having representatives from the veterans service organizations accompany us on the trip. It was helpful to have their perspective on the issues which we on the committee will face.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to accompany you and the other members. It was most informative.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

TIM HUTCHINSON
Member of Congress

TH:rf

SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
2d District, Georgia

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1002

April 23, 1993

The Honorable G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter comes in response to your request for my impressions of the CODEL trip to military bases in South Carolina and Georgia.

Let me first say that the trip yielded enlightening first-hand information on the implementation and effectiveness of the Montgomery GI Bill and the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) in recruiting high quality personnel to the country's armed services and in easing the transition from military to civilian life for separating personnel and civilian defense workers. An unexpected product of the trip was valuable information on the possible negative effects of a national service program on military recruitment. Moreover, the trip allowed me to get to know my colleagues on the Committee, the staff, and representatives of veterans service organizations on a much closer basis.

As a result of the visits to the three military installations in two states and testimony and comments from military recruits, NCO's, officers, retirees, and veterans service organization representatives, several things become clear.

First, the Montgomery GI Bill is an effective tool in the recruitment of high quality personnel for our armed forces, due to the educational and benefit incentives. Accordingly, the benefits are being utilized effectively. However, lack of funds for advertising these benefits, particularly in light of the highly publicized downsizing of the military and less job security for active duty personnel, threaten to compromise our ability to continue to successfully recruit high quality men and women. Further, when the prospect of a national service program with benefits comparable to those offered in the Montgomery GI Bill is discussed by recruiters, they anticipate an even more difficult time convincing young men and women to select the dangerous, risky discipline of a military lifestyle, over one where they can stay home in a national service program with similar benefits.

Next, the trip yielded positive reviews of the TAP designed to provide much needed assistance to our military personnel and DOD employees who separate from the military during this period of downsizing. For the most part, the program is working well, except for personnel who separate from overseas duty. The Committee must monitor this closely to assure TAP services to personnel separating from overseas as well as enhancing the existing TAP resources.

Finally, strong sentiment was expressed, though not necessarily related to the Montgomery GI Bill and TAP, against lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military. It was expressed almost unanimously by soldiers and veterans that discipline, morale, confidence and security would be compromised if the ban were lifted.

Let me say, Mr. Chairman, that I am most appreciative for the opportunity to share in this most informative experience. I certainly gained a better understanding of the challenges we face in maintaining a strong defense and supporting those who serve our country.

With warmest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Sanford

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

SDB/sam

JAMES E. CLYBURN
9TH DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

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OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAJORITY ZONE WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4006

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April 22, 1993

Honorable Sonny Montgomery, Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting me to accompany you on the recent site visits to Parris Island, Ft.Jackson, and Ft. Benning. The trip was informative and enlightening with regard to the GI Bill, transition assistance program, and military recruiting.

I have reviewed the draft report you forwarded to my office and found it to be an excellent summary of our observations and concerns relating to our purposes for the visit. As mentioned in the report, I am concerned about the sufficiency of advertising funds available for recruitment and will work with you to see that these funds are made available. Another concern of mine is the effect President Clinton's proposed national service corps will have on military recruitment. After all, the military is a national service corps and we must make sure that it remains an attractive career for America's young men and women.

Mr. Chairman, let me state again my sincere gratitude to you for holding a committee site visit in my district so early in my Congressional career. It provided me the opportunity to strengthen my relationship with veterans groups in my district and across the region.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

JEC:yrw

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES
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SOCIETY OF MILITARY WIDOWS
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"The Servicemember's Voice in Government"
Established 1968

April 19, 1993

The Honorable G. V. Montgomery, Chairman
Veterans Affairs Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for the invitation to accompany you on the field trip to Parris Island, South Carolina, Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, and to Fort Benning, Georgia on April 12 and 13, 1993.

As we have learned from talking with new recruits at each installation, the Montgomery GI Bill is clearly a tremendously effective recruiting incentive and has been the key in obtaining top quality personnel for our Armed Forces. Additional comments concerning the MGIB and the Transition Assistance Program are at the enclosure.

Again, I very much appreciate the opportunity to participate in this most informative trip and look forward to working with you and the Veterans Affairs Committee as you continue your review of these programs.

Sincerely,

Charles C. Partridge
Colonel, USA (Ret)
Legislative Counsel

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COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Montgomery GI Bill

It is clear from the trip that the Montgomery GI Bill is the single most effective recruiting incentive available for attracting top quality candidates into the Armed Forces. The information presented at Ft. Jackson that 95% of recruits eligible to enroll in the Montgomery GI Bill did so, points up the great value of the benefit. The 5% who did not enroll gave as reasons: (1) they could not afford the $100 per month deduction because of the needs of their families; (2) They had completed their educational goals; (3) They had other financial resources for college; (4) They were not college oriented.

The $100 per month military pay deduction kept some individuals out of the program simply because of family responsibilities. Any increase in the cost to the service member will keep more out. If we could reduce or eliminate the cost even futher, more of those who most need the education benefit would participate. Proposals to increase the cost to the servicemember are counter productive and would hurt the program, and I recommend that the Congress oppose such action.

The recruiters and commanders at all three bases expressed concern that a national service program with an educational benefit would drastically undercut the recruiting power of the MGIB. As one recruiter said, most individuals would rather go to college, live comfortably at home and repay the educational benefit by serving at a local hospital, than join the military with the loss of personal freedom, exposure to dangers, and challenging training and the potential for assignment in harms way. The conclusion is that the MGIB must be significantly more attractive than the national service educational benefit - probably on the order of 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 if the military services are to attract the necessary numbers of top quality recruits.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

The Transition Assistance Program and the Army Career and Alumni Program seem to be operating as intended. The quality of effort, enthusiasm and dedication of the commanders and staff involved in executing the program are high. One of the most important aspects of the program - an early start (180 days) in the process - seemed to be on track at the bases we visited. Cooperation of the local civilian business community, particularly at Ft. Jackson, was noteworthy and is certainly necessary if the program is to be successful. The basic test of effectiveness of the program is whether it helps participants get jobs. There was no system at any of the locations that tracked the success of participants in obtaining employment. A tracking system or periodic sampling procedure should be incorporated into the TAP. This would give solid evidence of its effectiveness.

The trip provided necessary insights into the highly effective Montgomery GI Bill and the Transition Assistance Program. We hope to work with you and help in any way we can as you fine tune these valuable programs.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NATIONAL SERVICE and LEGISLATIVE HEADQUARTERS
807 MAINE AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024
(202) 554-3501

MEMORANDUM

TO: FILE

FROM: Ronald W. Drach, National Employment Director

SUBJ: Site Visit to Parris Island, Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Fort Benning, Georgia

DATE: April 20, 1993

On April 12th and 13th, 1993, I accompanied a Congressional delegation led by G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery to the above sites. The purpose of this visit was to review the implementation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) with a view toward their impact on a national service program and on military recruitment.

The Marine Corp presentation to its new "recruits" regarding their enrollment in the MGIB was very militaristic and intimidating. By contrast, the Army's approach was less militaristic and more "sales" oriented with emphasis on the benefits of returning to school following military service and the monetary benefits available through participation in the MGIB. In attempting to put myself in the shoes of these recruits, I preferred the Army's approach. I do believe, however, the Marines Corps may be more results oriented because of the intimidation factor (ie. the recruit would be afraid to say no.)

Almost without question, all of the recruiting personnel we met were unanimous in their belief that the reduction in advertising budget for recruiting was having an affect not so much on their final results, but the means in which they achieved those results. Most of the recruiters said they spent more time "beating the bush" because their major advertising in the community was themselves in uniform. They participated and attended many school and other community functions to establish a presence and, their hours on the job were extended extensively. They also generally indicated the quality of the recruits had not suffered.

Of particular interest to me was the observation of Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) and the Transition Assitance Program (TAP). It became painfully evident at the outset that little if any emphasis was placed on the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). I have previously visited TAP briefings and at most of them, (as was the case in South Carolina and Georgia,) DTAP is secondary to TAP, if provided at all. For whatever reason the military seems to have little interest in assuring its disabled service members are provided adequate transition services to ease not only a traumatic change in lifestyle but a change made even more traumatic by a disability.

I was very disappointed to see the obvious lack of reference to DTAP and to my recollection the only reference to DTAP was in response to a question asked by myself.

It also appears that retirees receive transition services to a much higher degree than the first term enlistee. This perhaps can be attributed to the military's propensity to take care of their own -- in this situation someone who has spent 20 or more years in the military.

The entire trip was probably the most organized trip I have ever been on and was certainly kept on schedule. I also consider it highly successful, informative and beneficial to me in my efforts as National Employment Director. Also, I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in such a worthwhile effort.

Ronald W. Drach

RONALD W. DRACH
National Employment Director

RWD:mb

Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22209-1198 (703) 247-5800
An Independent Non Profit Aerospace Organization

MONROE W. HATCH, JR.
Executive Director

April 19, 1993

The Honorable G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U. S. House of Representatives
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for including me along with your delegation from the House of Representatives and leaders of veterans' organizations on the recently concluded trip to military bases in South Carolina and Georgia.

There is always something to be said for leaving the confines of Washington, D.C., and travelling to the field to see first-hand how our men and women who serve in today's armed forces are coping with the many challenges they face.

It was clear to me, after visiting Parris Island, Fort Jackson and Fort Benning, that educational benefits are still a major reason young high school graduates are enlisting in the armed forces, and topping the list of educational benefits is the Montgomery G.I. Bill. The additional benefits offered for specialty training and the opportunities for off duty education all combine as a strong incentive for young Americans to join. It was also clear from the recruiters we spoke to at each base that a national service program that might offer similar educational benefits would have a definite negative impact on military recruitment. As the definition of a "national service program" takes shape, this factor should be taken into account early on to avoid any negative outcome.

In general, we saw that the uncertainty surrounding future military careers, and issues such as homosexuals serving openly in the armed forces, and the lack of sufficient advertising funds for recruiting are having a negative impact. We need to remind everyone that the professional all volunteer forces serving us so well today are not guaranteed for the indefinite future. Military recruiting is complex and is not a faucet that can be turned on and off at will.

Finally, I thought the transition assistance programs and the workshops being conducted for separatees and retirees showed excellent progress compared to what was being done just twelve to eighteen months ago. The obvious spirit of cooperation that exists between DoD, the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans' Affairs was reassuring and even though a lot remains to be done, I was impressed with the top down military and civilian support and the commitment of the people in charge at the state and installation level. I was not surprised to learn that overseas units are less capable of providing this transition training.

Again, my thanks for being included. I always learn from trips such as this.

Sincerely,

Monroe W. Hatch, Jr.
General, USAF (Ret.)

NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

ONE MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NORTHWEST • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001 • (202) 789-0031 • FAX (202) 682-9358

19 April 1993

Mr. Eugene Brickhouse
House Veterans' Affairs Committee Staff
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Eugene:

It was a real pleasure to be included on Chairman Montgomery's visit to Parris Island, Fort Jackson and Fort Benning. I was quite impressed by the scope and professionalism of the transition assistance being provided to our soldiers and marines, transitioning from active duty.

It was also a pleasure to meet and talk to so many of our professional recruiters who have done such a tremendous job of building quality into our military services in recent years. The opportunity we had to visit with basic trainees served to reinforce the level of quality we have been able to achieve in our service personnel.

It would be hard to think of any suggestions to make to improve the trip, but I must admit that there was some disappointment after 42 years, for the first time, to pay to ride in a U.S. Air Force plane. Unfortunately, this resulted in several invitees not being able to accept the invitation.

One small suggestion from the viewpoint of comfort would be to reserve the business suits for the dinner meeting and travel and visit soldiers in more casual attire.

Again, it was a pleasure to be part of the group.

Regards,

ROBERT F. ENSSLIN, JR.
Major General, NGUS (Ret.)
Executive Director

WORKING DRAFT

MEMORANDUM THROUGH: **LARRY W. RIVERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: **JOHN M. CARNEY, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

On April 12-13, 1993, I and other VSO representatives accompanied House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery and members James E. Clyburn, Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., and Tim Y. Hutchinson to Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Fort Benning, Georgia. The purpose of the trip was to collect information to assess the impact of the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) on recruiting and the effectiveness of the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) on personnel departing the Service.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

At all locations, recruiters and drill instructors, and commanders were in agreement the MGIB was a very important, and successful, tool in recruiting the quality personnel needed in the All Volunteer Force. Indeed, within a short time (1986), the MGIB has become the foundation for recruiting and the Services build upon it with additional educational programs (kickers) to entice quality recruits. Introduction of a National Service Act rewarding participants with college financing will potentially weaken the MGIB's effectiveness and measures must be taken soon to preserve or revitalize, if necessary, the MGIB. At the recruiting level, the lack of advertising funds has not had a severe impact yet. But a drop in public attitude favoring military service is partly attributable to the lack of advertising and has caused recruiters to work even harder to reach their target audiences. Some speculated that further defense downsizing and the issue of homosexuals in the service would erode overall public attitudes towards military service.

TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) was observed at Forth Jackson and Fort Benning. The program is teaching effective techniques in finding a job or alerting departing servicemen to the resources available to start a business of their own. When coupled with the U.S. Army's Career Alumni Program, the value to departing servicemen increased by exposing them to job forces and career opportunities and also by boosting their self-confidence. Since we did not visit any air or naval bases it was not determined if those services had programs similar to the Army's ACAP. TAP's personnel were mindful of the special needs of the disabled veteran but it was uncertain if those needs were being fully met. Indeed, Chairman Montgomery noted with concern, that the strengths, weaknesses and overall value of TAP were uncertain because there was no feedback to measure success/failure. I noted the VFW Department Officers were fully involved in the TAP at Fort Jackson, South Carolina but were not available at Fort Benning, Georgia.

OBSERVATIONS

It is clear the MGIB has become the foundation for recruiting for the military services. What is just as clear, but probably unknown, is that the MGIB has played a large role in shaping favorable public attitudes towards the All Volunteer Force. This was apparent from talking to recruits who mentioned their parents praise for the educational opportunities available in the MGIB.

We must prepare for potential changes in public attitudes and in the value of the MGIB to the potential recruits caused by an improving economy and by competition with a National Service Act. If the MGIB loses its key role in shaping favorable public attitudes and attracting recruits, the All Volunteer Force is endangered by the failure to attract enough high quality recruits. The alternative to failure will be a return to the draft.

The TAP has not had the significant impact on departing military personnel that the MGIB has had on recruiting. At the risk of mixing apples and oranges, let us note that TAP ought to be highly effective in marketing the high quality, disciplined, loyal and hard-working military servicemen and women since it is, or soon will be using the same high quality personnel recruited by means of the MGIB

But to become more effective, TAP needs to be properly evaluated. Perhaps a short term commission could quickly examine TAP and individual service programs, collect and evaluate feedback and offer constructive recommendations to make TAP more effective.

THE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2539
(703) 549-2311

April 19, 1993

The Honorable G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for including me on your recent CODEL to Parris Island, Ft. Jackson, and Ft. Benning. The administrative and logistical arrangements were excellent. I'm not sure why DoD directed retired military to pay for travel on a government airplane when there was space available. Nonetheless, the trip was very beneficial to TROA and to me personally.

Recruiting: The Services' recruiting representatives were very impressive. The reduction in advertising monies is already causing numerous difficulties including unreasonably long working hours. Education (opportunities within the service and funding for post-service college) is clearly the number one recruiting tool. A National Service Program must not offer educational incentives which are competitive or better than the Montgomery G.I. Bill, or military recruiting will be seriously degraded and could lead us back to the turbulence which was prevalent in the mid-late 1970's.

Montgomery G.I. Bill: An exceptional program. The presentation differed at each Base, but the recruits were familiar with the program from previous discussions with their recruiter. I was pleased to learn, through individual conversations with various recruits, how well organized they were and what good goals they had established for themselves.

Transition Assistance: Although presented a little differently at each post, clearly the intent was to help the individual Soldier/Marine to prepare for and transition out of the military and into a civilian job. The major hole in these programs seems to be that there is no established follow-up to validate the money and effort spent by the government. Some method of reporting back/survey of those who have gone through the transition program must be established in order to make improvements in the program.

Rappelling: Clearly, the Marines showed us the best rappelling program!

Sincerely,

William R. Hart
Colonel, USMC (Ret)
Deputy Director, Government Relations

WRH/mw

Bob Jones
National Executive Director - AMVETS

TRIP REPORT
April 12 - 13, 1993

AT THE INVITATION OF G.V. "SONNY" MONTGOMERY
CHAIRMAN, HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I participated in a congressional delegation visit on April 12th and 13th, 1993.

Purpose: Observe the implementation of the transition assistance program (TAP) and the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) to determine the possible effects of a national service program on military recruitment.

Sites visited:

Parris Island, SC	USMC	Host: MG Gene A. Deegan
Ft. Jackson, SC	USA	Host: MG Richard S. Siegfried
Ft. Benning, GA	USA	Host: MG Jerry A. White

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)

- Service recruiters at each of the sites expressed the importance of the MGIB as a recruiting tool. This observation is reflected in national enrollment statistics.

- There was a stark contrast between the USMC and USA formal presentations to explain the MGIB Bill to recruits. The USMC utilized a traditional recruit "lecture" approach presenting the MGIB during their first 24-48 hours in the corps, utilizing a military instructor. Recruits had little or no rest and were obviously experiencing severe culture shock. The USA utilized a combination of military and civilian instructors in a "conference multi-media" style of presentation during the first 24 to 72 hours.

- The regimented style of presentation in a stressful environment utilized by the USMC did not promote a dialogue and the intimidating delivery observed is of questionable value in promoting the merits of the MGIB. The author believes that this is directly reflected in the relatively low enrollment rate (8.9% below USMC national enrollment of 88.9%) of USMC recruits at Parris Island.

• The USA demonstrated a three tier counseling approach for recruits that opt out of the MGIB which utilized the company chain of command who are most familiar to the recruit. Approximately 60% of those who opt out reverse their decision and enroll in the MGIB.

• Those who opt out of the MGIB most commonly expressed:

* a need for the associated MGIB individual contribution to defray family expenses
* already completed individual educational goals
* not college oriented
* have preestablished financial arrangements to defray educational expenses

Recruiting/national service alternatives:

• It was readily apparent that reductions in recruiting advertisement appropriations was impacting upon the ability of all service recruiters to access a quality audience.

• The USMC reported that though they presently are not accepting mental category IV recruits, there has been a subtle shift in recruit standards.

* There has been a 2-3% increase in acceptance of Mental Category III B recruits. The USA continues to recruit category IV individuals.
* Enlistment waivers have increased substantially.
* First term discharge rates have increased.
* Approximately 4% of recruits are married with no minor dependents. An estimated 50% of USA are married.
* Turmoil in the defense establishment as projected in the media is impeding recruiters and affecting the attitudes of the general eligible population. Areas of common concern are:
  - -defense reduction: the military is no longer perceived as a secure dependable employer
  - -predisposition of the administration to lift the military service ban on homosexual recruitment
  - -national service alternatives that provide equal or greater enticements than those offered by the Department of Defense

- It was noted that there was little demonstrated knowledge among recruiters concerning the national service concept. Recruiters all agreed that among the eligible population, a general attitude exists to take a path of least resistance with maximum personal gain, thus national service will become the preferred choice of service versus the armed forces if incentives are similar in nature.

- The quality of the armed forces has begun a gradual downward spiral. This erosion is exacerbated by the inability of the military to maintain recruiting standards. It was observed that recruits, as well as career personnel, are intimately aware of declining benefits normally associated with military duty such as veterans entitlements, employment and training opportunities.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)/Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP):

- The author has been involved in TAP since the mid-1980's when the first pilot program was established at Fort Bragg, NC and was instrumental in developing the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP) concept.

- After having observed first hand TAP/ACAP in Seoul, Korea, and receiving comments from participants separating in Europe and Panama, I am highly suspect of the effectiveness and efficiency of overseas programs. Local commanders, particularly in combat units, are mission oriented. This orientation precludes separating personnel from participating in the program early in the mandated period.

- It is distressing to observe a TAP instructor advising participants to go directly to potential employers, bypassing the State Employment Security Agency, thus precluding use of dedicated employment service and veteran employment staff. This perpetuates the common lack of trust of the State Employment Security Agency (SESA), and does not promote the LVER/DVOP role.

- It appears generally that retirees are receiving the benefits of TAP to a much greater degree than those who are separating prior to retirement.

- DTAP was acknowledged but not discussed in any depth. Slides, handouts, etc. did not contain information on this important program, raising a concern that, in the field, effective application of this effort is severely lacking.

- Linkages with other federal programs such as those offered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Small Business Administration (SBA) were not promoted. There was no visible access to federal job listings, nor was COLMIS utilization apparent.

- Statistics were readily available concerning program participants and accomplishments. However, painfully absent was data to reflect TAP/ACAP effectiveness in assisting participants to obtain employment or training.

- It is noted that each state receives a computer tape of separating personnel who, potentially, are returning to the area in question and that approximately 5% of separating personnel remain in the area of discharge. Cross-referencing the available information with SESA applicants apparently is not occurring. There is a lack of interface/tracking of separating personnel in the employment and training arena.

- The author is aware that the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training is conducting a contracted analysis of TAP that will potentially report effectiveness in job/training placement. Some information is available as demonstrated by the South Carolina follow-up questionnaire and the ACAP site at Fort Benning which was decorated with success stories. The South Carolina model is a cost effective, innovative program that addresses the total force and is a worthy program for replication. I was particularly impressed with the program knowledge of MG Siegfried and his obvious hands-on involvement with the SESA. Program success can be directly attributed to the commitment demonstrated by state and military program administrators and the degree of oversight exercised. At the national level, no single agency is responsible for transition programs. The effort is fragmented among three federal agencies, each with unique and separate agendas.

Conclusions:

The trip was well organized and highly successful. The opportunity to view first hand the implementation of the MGIB and TAP/ACAP was extremely beneficial and will prove invaluable in our liaison with the Congress as well as affected federal agencies.

Enacting legislation that establishes a national service program must be scrutinized with care. Implementation of a national service program that offers benefits equal to or greater than those offered for military service will do irreparable damage to the ability of the Department of Defense to maintain a quality armed force capable of achieving our strategic international objectives within a reduced force structure.

Budget reductions that directly affect recruiting advertisement efforts are eroding the ability of the armed services to obtain and maintain desired recruit standards. Recruit deficiencies directly attributable to these budget reductions will manifest themselves in a 5 year window that corresponds directly to the periods of enlistment for each branch of service.

RLJ/nd

ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

2425 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201-3385 (703) 841-4300

16 April 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Montgomery, House Veterans Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: Observations During CODEL Montgomery 12-13 April 1993

1. At Fort Jackson I was particularly impressed by the briefing by state representatives of South Carolina which tied the federal, state and Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) together to assist transitioning service personnel at military installations throughout the state. There is, however, a need for feedback from participants in order to more accurately measure the successes and failures in the programs.

2. I took advantage at every stop to question recruits, drill sergeants, junior and senior officers about the administration's intention to lift the ban on service in the military by avowed homosexuals. Except for one recruit who had not heard about it they were unanimous in opposition to lifting the ban. "Sir, it just won't work," was the universal response.

ERIK G. JOHNSON, JR.
Colonel, USA Retired
Director, Legislative Affairs

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

OFFICE OF: Adjutant General

April 16, 1993

G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Montgomery:

Enclosed please find the report requested by your staff.

Let me take this opportunity to again thank you for the invitation. The trip was most educational and I hope that I was able to contribute. Your idea for including VSO's on this type of COOEL is most gratifying and, I believe, appropriate.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL S. PROTHERO
Adjutant General

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART TRIP REPORT

1. Preparations: HVAC staff was very helpful. (Ms's Beth Kilker, Winsome Parker and Jill Cothran in particular). Perhaps an earlier distribution of the tentative agenda would have facilitated preparations on the part of the VSO's.

2. Logistics: Outstanding! The military escorts were helpful and extremely competent. The transportation and accommodations were well planned and without any apparent hitch.

3. Itinerary: Overall the purpose of the trip was well accomplished. The commanders of the installations were open and accommodating. The schedule was somewhat compressed and perhaps more time could have been devoted to some of the classes and briefings, particularly to questions and answers. The time would have been saved by reducing the number of recruiter interviews. One would have been sufficient, at Parris Island, for example, where there was no transition briefing. Overall the itinerary was well thought out and very complete.

4. Purpose: It appears that the Montgomery GI Bill is being extremely well used by the U.S. Army. Combined with the Army College Fund and the follow up procedures for those who decline the participation is highly satisfactory. It appears that the USMC is not following up on those who decline.

On the subject of TAP (and DTAP), once again the U.S. Army seems to have the program well in hand, in the U.S., along with their own (ACAP) program. I am concerned that there is apparently not a mechanism to follow up to see how many jobs are actually secured as a result of TAP. As was evident at Fort Jackson, it is not at all sure that the overseas commands are complying with the requirements of TAP in terms of making time available to the soldier to attend the classes.

Overall, the trip was well worthwhile and examinations of U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force programs may well be in order.

MICHAEL B. BROTHERS
Adjutant General

(Date)

The American Legion
For God And Country

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-2847 ★
(202) 861-2700 ★

April 16, 1993

The Honorable G.V. Montgomery
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The American Legion appreciates the opportunity to share with you and the Committee some thoughts following the congressional field trip to Parris Island, South Carolina; Ft. Jackson, South Carolina; and Ft. Benning, Georgia.

The Montgomery GI Bill

As you know, The American Legion is a strong supporter of the current educational opportunities offered to the men and women in the Military today, but we remain concerned that the benefits offered cover barely half of what it costs to go to a state supported college or university these days. In fact, it appeared to me that a number of the soon-to-be-discharged troops were more interested in finding work than in going back to school. The gap between what the GI Bill currently provides, and what it takes to go to school makes it necessary to work full time, and attend school part time, rather than the reverse, which has been historically true. Clearly, the Legion does not oppose the idea of working one's way through school, but when it is a necessity rather than a choice, we're concerned about the hardship on veterans.

We are also concerned that benefits which might be offered to people participating in a domestic service corps could exceed those offered people who are willing to put their lives on the line in defense of freedom. The least that should happen is that the benefits for the non military participants are not better than those offered to veterans. The Legion will continue to press for equity in this area, and we want to work with you and the Committee to enhance the educational benefits currently available, until they are on a par with those received by the parents and grandparents of the men and women currently in uniform.

Transition Assistance/Job Assistance

While I was impressed by some of the efforts in South Carolina and Georgia, it was clear to the people on this trip that the caliber of transition assistance is largely dependent upon the willingness of a base commander to make the programs available. The future of tomorrow's veterans is too important to trust to that kind of chance, and I am certain that you will bring the shortcomings we found to the attention of the appropriate federal officials.

We also encourage private groups to follow the Legion's lead in providing direct assistance to veterans who are looking for work. I have shared with you the basic outline of The American Legion/Laborers International Union program to train veterans for jobs that actually exist in the market. We think a good use of federal funds would be to encourage this kind of direct assistance to veterans. Our program has the active and eager participation of a labor union, management and The American Legion. As long as we can find veterans willing to do the work the LIU trains for, we can guarantee that veterans will be working if they want to be.

Again, the Legion appreciates the opportunity to be with you on this trip, and we look forward to working with you on these and other issues in the future.

Sincerely,

JOHN HANSON, Director
National Veterans Affairs and
Rehabilitation Commission

Reserve Officers Association of the United States
The Professional Association Representing All Officers

16 April 1993

TO EUGENE BRICKHOUSE

FROM FRANK A. EDENS, DIRECTOR, ARMY AFFAIRS, ROA

SUBJECT: CODEL Montgomery, 12 - 13 April 93

1. It was a pleasure and an honor as well as educationally and professionally rewarding to be able to participate in the Montgomery Congressional Delegation this week. My personnel thanks to the military and professional staffers alike who did such a commendable job in putting this CODEL together and keeping this well planned and executed trip on track. My professional thanks to Congressman Montgomery, Bishop, Clyburn, and Hutchinson for their demonstrated concern and support for our military personnel.

2. A few thoughts and concerns:

a. RECRUITER PANELS.

o RECRUITING FUNDING The three recruiter panels were thought and eye openers - I hadn't realized the severity of funding reductions for our recruiting force until this CODEL. It appears that these cuts are requiring our recruiters, at least those who wish to be successful, to "beg" local billboard companies to display recruiting advertisements - really pathetic! The comment by one Air Force recruiter about little things, such as no shinny objects to give away; other comments about the difficulty in reaching the masses without a national advertising campaign and the growing requirement then to spend considerably more time educating prospective recruits about military service; and the comment about prospects' concerns that the military is now laying people off and isn't really a career any longer all enforce the belief that the recruiters are being "helped" to eventually fail in reaching mission. I believe serious consideration should be given to increasing the funding allocated to recruiting and will work with my association to spread the word about this short coming.

o NATIONAL SERVICE By the time we got to the third panel at Fort Benning it was apparent that recruiters use the phone. That group was aware of the question on national service and seemed concerned that it could severely impact on their recruiting population especially if it were more rewarding than service in the military and would allow the applicant to stay at

home with "mama" without making a sacrifice. Congressman's Hutchinson's comment about military service being a form of national service should be stressed (maybe I missed it) and kept as the highest and most rewarded form of any national service program.

o QUALITY OF RECRUITS The information we received at Fort Benning about the 4% influx of CAT IV soldiers into the Army is disturbing. Even though that recruiting window is now closed it's an example of what's ahead if we allow the military to become less attractive to competing civilian and government recruiting programs. We need to be thankful to Congressman Montgomery for his foresight in introducing and obtaining congressional approval for the MGIB. Without it our recruiters would be having an even more difficult task in their efforts. We definitely need to keep military service as the center piece of any legislative effort to promote National Service. We also need to reconsider the policy of excluding GED prospects w/o 24 college credits while we recruit CAT IV personnel. There must be a better way to ensure we get the best possible recruit into our military.

o GAYS IN THE MILITARY The comment from one recruiter about the ban on gays in the military, which in his opinion is not a major issue now in recruiting young men and women, but will impact on future recruiting if the ban is dropped, reinforced my belief and ROA's stated position that the ban must be continued.

b. MONTGOMERY GI BILL It appears there is almost a 100% awareness and almost as high an acceptance of the MGIB. It definitely is the major contributor to a prospect's decision on entering the military and is viewed as essential by recruiters and other military personnel alike in convincing young men and women to sign up. We must continue the MGIB if we expect to attract the high caliber recruit we need in today's high tech environment.

c. TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM The programs at both Fort Jackson and Fort Benning appear to be doing a decent job in educating transitioning soldiers and spouses (I didn't see that many spouses) about the steps they need to take in moving from the military to the civilian world. South Carolina's program and questionnaire (which is apparently mailed to all military from SC) appear to be sound and maybe even effective. DoD might copy SC's program and use it as a model for other installations/bases. I was very concerned about Panama's TAP, apparently the command has other priorities!

3. A great opportunity and exposure to the issues. Allows us to see and hear the real issues from those closest to them!

Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America

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April 16, 1993

The Honorable G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery
Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Montgomery:

Thank you very much for inviting me to accompany you and other members of the Veteran's Committee on the fact finding trip to examine the effectiveness of the Montgomery G. I. Bill and the Transition Assistance Program for members of the armed services. I sincerely enjoyed the company of you and the other members of the delegation. Moreover, I found the journey to be a tremendous learning experience.

Per your request, I am pleased to share with you the following observations.

Montgomery G. I. Bill

o Notwithstanding significantly different presentations made to recruits about their Montgomery G. I. Bill options, consistently high participation rates and recruit response to the briefings seem to suggest that this aspect of the program is working adequately.

o While withdrawal rates from the MGIB are low, concern remains that some recruits may be denied participation because they can not afford the pay forfeitures associated with enrollment.

o Congress should be particularly sensitive to concerns expressed by both recruits and recruiters over raising the MGIB enrollment fee to $1,600. Such an increase would degrade its value as a recruiting tool, would diminish enrollment, would reduce education benefits, and would make the MGIB less competitive with nonveteran education program.

o While not totally familiar with pending national service proposals, virtually all military personnel indicated a belief that benefits under national service should not exceed benefits under the Montgomery G. I. Bill.

Transition Assistance Program

o Like the MGIB, the Transition Assistance Program seems to be fulfilling its goals although it appeared that relatively few people were present at the transition centers by comparison with the number of pending separations.

o At least one transitioning soldier indicated that he was not allowed to participate in the transition assistance program because his commander would not allow him time to do so. Subsequently, one of the local commanders with whom we met privately confided in me the same attitude. Specifically stated "If I let every transitioning soldier spend all the time they want, or think they need or deserve, at ACAP or TAP, I'd never complete my mission."

o Although the transition briefing we received was abbreviated, more emphasis could have been placed on the advantages of enrolling in the Montgomery G.I. Bill and on eligibility to file for disability benefits.

o DTAP efforts seem to lack the emphasis placed on TAP and ACAP.

Other Important Issues

o Without exception, every officer and enlisted member with whom I conversed was opposed to two issues: the proposed pay freeze; and, the possible acceptance of homosexuals in the armed forces.
o Reductions in recruit advertising funds are beginning to adversely affect military recruiting efforts according to both canvasing recruiters and recruiting area commanders.

o Working relations between the Department of Labor and the armed services on TAP and ACAP seem adequate but the absence of leadership at the Veterans Employment and Training Service may be taking a toll on the effectiveness of Labor Department participation.

o The outstationing of Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veteran Employment Representatives compliments the TAP/ACAP efforts but would not be possible if DVOP's/LVER's were assigned additional duties to include unemployment insurance interviews.

Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of this very unique experience. Hopefully you will find these observations useful.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Johnson
Executive Director for
Government Affairs