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DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION
The Board on Children, Youth, and Families

Voices from the Field: Committee on the Well-being of Military Families
Public Information-Gathering Session

Speaker Biographies

Ashley Broadway-Mack is the President and founding board member of the American Military Partner Association (AMPA). It was through AMPA that Ashley found her new passion to assist other lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender military families by working through the existing inequalities we face. Through her over 19 years as a military spouse, she is able to combine the traditions of the Army, while moving towards its vision of tomorrow. She is honored to serve as the President of AMPA where she leads the organization in a strategic mission of education, advocacy, and support for our modern military families. She was recently awarded the Secretary of the Army Public Service Award by the Honorable Eric K. Fanning and has received the Commander's Award for Public Service by Lieutenant General Darrell Williams. Before co-founding AMPA, she taught elementary school for 13 years, specializing in dyslexia, English as a Second Language, and children with reading difficulties.

Col. (Ret) Anthony Cox started his Army career in 1983 as an enlisted cook in the USAR, then from 1985 to 1990 as a field artillery officer in the USAR and GA-ARNG. Since joining the active Army in 1990 as a Social Work officer, he has had a wide variety of BH assignments and experiences including direct care, research, automation, operations, policy, prevention, epidemiology, and leadership. He has served on a variety of mental health-focused panels and work groups such as the XO to the BH response team for the 2009 Fort Hood shooting as well as the EPICON to Fort Carson to evaluate the murders taking place there. He served as the Deputy Chief of Staff on the Secretary of the Army's Task Force on Behavioral Health, the Army's FAP Manager in charge of the Family Advocacy and Exceptional Family Member Programs, and provided Army oversight of the Military Family Life Counseling program. From 2015 to his recent retirement in October 2017, he led the Department of Behavioral Health Sciences at the AMEDD Center & School where he oversaw the training of military and civilian behavioral health providers and specialist personnel in counseling, therapy, FAP, ASAP, COSC, PTSD, and resiliency building subjects. Since retiring, COL (Retired) Cox is focusing on his favorite jobs: treating child/adolescent BH patients and their families, serving as unit commissioner for the Boy Scouts of America, and serving as an area youth minister for his church.

Ellyn Dunford is a military family advocate and military spouse of over 33 years. Professionally she was a Physical Therapist for almost 30 years, mostly in pediatrics and developmental disabilities. Currently she participates with numerous military family and veteran organizations to help spread their message and advise them regarding concerns of the military family and how to link to complementary organizations. She has been a community volunteer since her teens.

Elka Franco-Giordano is the spouse of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. She was born in Lima, Peru and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. She graduated from Kenwood High School in June 1993. Following graduation, she attended The Community Colleges of Baltimore County earning her AA and AS degrees. She later obtained her Registered Nurse licensure. Affiliating with military service since 1999 as a spouse of a United States Navy Sailor, she has called Spain, Florida, Georgia, Rhode Island, California, Colorado, Virginia, and Italy home. Throughout this time and across the spectrum of locations, she has been a volunteer at multiple Naval Hospitals, the American Red Cross, United Service Organizations, Overseas Support Clubs, School Advisory Boards and Parent Teacher Associations. Currently, she is engaged as Advisor to Naval Service Familyline, as well as a Board member for the Navy Maine Corps Relief Society. She has served as a member of the Military Family Readiness Council since March 2017 and was designated the Chief of Naval Operations OMBUDSMAN-at-Large on September 2, 2016.

Kelly Hokanson is the spouse of Lieutenant General Daniel Hokanson, Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau. She was born and raised in the Bay Area of California where her parents retired after her father's 26 years in the Navy, which included service in World War II and the Korean War. She graduated from Western Oregon University, and received her Master's Degree in Health Education and Teacher Education from Oregon State University. She has taught at the middle school, high school and junior college level. She has served as a Family Readiness Group (FRG) leader at almost every level in both active duty and National Guard units, is an honorary Gala Ambassador for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), and has been involved with the USO and served as an advisory board member in Portland and a board member for the USO Northwest.

Susan Lukas became the Director, Legislation & Military Policy/Air Force Section for the Reserve Officers Association on September 1, 2017. In this role, she manages the Air Force Section focusing on authorization and appropriation legislation positions for the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. Prior to moving into this role, she served as ROA's Director of Legislation and Military Policy during 2014 - 2017. She has worked in the Congressional legislative field for 20 years. She has authored and managed legislative proposals for United States Code Titles 5, 10, 27, 32, 37 and 38, which resulted in several becoming public law. During this time, she has testified or provided testimony to the House and Senate Armed Services committees, the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Defense, and the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committee. She retired from the Air Force Reserve in December 2008, with over thirty-five years of active, guard, and reserve duty and has now completed forty-two years of total federal service. Upon her military retirement, she was employed with the Department of Veterans Affairs as the Senior Legislative Advisor in the Office of Budget. As part of that, she managed the Air Force Reserve Unified Legislative and Budget process for the President's Budget and the Omnibus legislative submissions for the National Defense Authorization Act. She has volunteered many hours of service with civic and non-profit organizations in each community she has resided. She completed her bachelor's degree with Columbia College in June 1990 and her Master of Public Administration in January 2003 with George Mason University.

Jill Marconi is the Director of Airman and Family Readiness at the 446th Air Lift Wing, Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington. She oversees the needs of all service personnel and their families before, during, and after deployment. She has been employed by the Department of Defense for over 30 years. School of Social Work, Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana. Department of

Defense, Reserve Family Readiness Award Recipient, 2016. 434th Air Refueling Wing, Non Supervisor of the Year, 2016 434th Air Refueling Wing, Civilian of the Year, 2012. Air Reserve Command, Office of the Inspector General, Superior Performer Award. Department of the Army, Distinguished Performance for Civilian Service.

Donald “Rob” Neff is currently the Deputy Director of the Preservation of the Force and Family at U.S. Special Operations Command. In this capacity, he oversees the policy, budget and programmatic aspects of the command’s holistic wellness initiatives. Prior to his current position, he was a Social Work Officer in the U.S. Army. His last assignment while on active duty was with the U.S. Special Operations Command’s Information Operations directorate (J-39) Joint Military Information Support Command in Tampa, FL, where he led a team of behavioral scientists conducting transnational/transregional counter terror/radicalization research, target audience analysis and planning for psychological operations. As an Army Social Work Officer, he held a variety of clinical and administrative positions in medical and operational settings, which included multiple combat deployments with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne, and the 1st Armored Division. He also held clinical leadership positions at Tripler Army Medical.

Chaplain (COL) Jimmy Nichols currently serves as the Garrison Chaplain at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He is a native of Antlers, Oklahoma. He is an ordained minister in the Church of God. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Pastoral Ministry in 1992 from Lee University and a Master of Divinity in 1995 from the Church of God Theological Seminary. Upon selection for the Army Advanced Civilian Schooling, he also earned a Master of Science in Community Counseling in 2007 from Columbus State University. He entered the chaplaincy at Fort Hood, Texas in 1996 serving three years in the 4th Infantry Division. He then served two years at Camp Yongsan Korea at a Military Intelligence Battalion. Next came service in the 82d Airborne Division’s, 2-504 Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) at Fort Bragg, NC and Kandahar Afghanistan. From 2004-07, Chaplain Nichols served as the Brigade Chaplain for the 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, KY and South West Baghdad. He served as the Family Life Chaplain in Heidelberg, Germany from 2008-11 followed by teaching at the Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, SC and also serving as the Senior Task Analyst, 2011-14. He then served as the Deputy 1st Corps Chaplain at Joint Base Lewis McChord WA, followed by serving as the 7th Infantry Division Chaplain until his assignment to Fort Sill as the Garrison Chaplain July of 2017.

Karen Ruedisueli joined the National Military Family Association as a Deputy Director of Government Relations in May, 2013. In her role, she conducts research, monitors issues, and advocates for families of the uniformed services. Her focus is on military family health care, including the Military Health System, TRICARE, and behavioral health care. In this capacity, she serves as the co-chair of The Military Coalition’s (TMC) Health Care Committee and as the Association’s representative on the TRICARE for Kids Coalition. She also handles issues related to wounded warriors and military caregivers. A graduate of the University of Michigan, she previously worked as a marketing professional and management consultant. She has extensive experience in market research, brand strategy, and new product/service development. She has also been a guest lecturer at Northwestern University’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management on the topic of brand-based innovation. As an Army spouse, she has had extensive volunteer experience identifying and resolving military family issues. She served as a Battery level Family Readiness Group Leader during the unit’s train up and deployment to Afghanistan. She also served as the Co-Director of

Research for Blue Star Families and led the development and analysis of their first Military Family Lifestyle Survey.

Ed Tyner is the Associate Director, Office of Military Family Readiness Policy. Immediately before accepting this position, he served as Administrator, Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) in the Director's Office, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) in Europe. Part of his duties there included conducting Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) educational screenings for families going to overseas locations where there is not a DoD school. During his tenure, he interacted with international schools, private schools, and other local national schools. He began his career in education as a consulting/resource teacher in Tennessee and has served as a teacher, educational diagnostician, school-level administrator and in multiple above school-level management positions both in and outside special education. While serving as the Special Education Coordinator for DoD schools in Panama and then later for DoD schools in Europe, he coordinated the overseas educational screenings for the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) between the military departments and DoDEA. He also served as the Deputy to the Chief of the Education Division and later as Acting Chief for DoDEA-Europe overseeing approximately twenty (20) educational programs.

Anthony A. Wickham graduated from the United States Military Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and joined the Active Duty Army as an armor officer in 1982. Highlights of his career include time in Germany and mobilization to Iraq with the 116th Cavalry Brigade from the Idaho Army National Guard in 2004. Upon his retirement from the military as a Colonel in 2012, he was selected as the Family Programs Chief of National Guard Bureau. He then was given additional oversight of Transition Assistance, Employment Support, Yellow Ribbon and Suicide Prevention. He has an MBA from Boise State University and a Masters of Strategic Studies from the US Army War College.