

Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Armed Forces Veterans Meeting

12th June 2013 at the Scottish Parliament

Minutes

Attending	
Name	Organisation
Mr Alex Fergusson MSP	Scottish Parliament - Convenor
Ms Anabel Ewing MSP	Scottish Parliament
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland
Rev A Keulmans	Veterans & Families Support Network
Jane Lorimer	Veterans & Families Support Network
David McGrath	ESVAPC
Gary Gray	PoppyScotland
George Clark	RFEA and SSERSSA
Barry Henderson	Glasgow's Helping Heroes
Margaret Barton	Remploy
Maj Gene Maxwell	SO2 Transition HQ 51 Bde
Ian McGregor	CEO PoppyScotland
Ally Gemmell	ASAP
Steve Conway	CEO Erskine
Graham Dunlop	RMA
Ross Swinton	Thistle Foundation
Margaret J Miller	Centre/Project Manager
Neil Robinson	RBLS
Apologies	
Mr Bruce Crawford MSP	Mr Richard Lyle MSP
Mr Willie Rennie MSP	Col Martin Gibson, Veterans Scotland
Mr Stewart Maxwell MSP	

1. **Introduction:** Mr Alex Fergusson MSP, Convenor AFV Cross Party Group, welcomed those attending and indicated that the main focus for consideration at this meeting was to be Transition and Employment for veterans.

2. **Minutes of Previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous Cross Party Group meeting, held on 17th April 2013, were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters Arising:** Mr Fergusson indicated that as yet there was no firm date set for a members debate which had been proposed at the previous meeting. There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

4. **Topics for Consideration:** The Convenor had previously indicated that the main topics for consideration at this meeting were to be the Transition and Employment of veterans. He introduced Mr Ian McGregor, CEO of PoppyScotland and Chair of the Veterans Scotland Support Pillar, who set the context of employment and transition for veterans in Scotland. He emphasised that there is a lot of good news for former Service personnel returning to Scotland; Mr McGregor then introduced:

a. Maj Gene Maxwell from HQ 51 (Scottish) Brigade with particular responsibility for the Transition of Service personnel who delivered a presentation on the processes involved in preparing Service personnel for leaving the Services and adjusting back into a civilian environment. He emphasised that over 90% transition well and have civilian employment shortly after leaving the Services. He described the training system and support available in Service

and b. Mr Jim Wilson, General Secretary of Veterans Scotland, gave a presentation on what support is available once an individual has left the Services.

5. Discussion and Questions: Following the presentations, the matters were discussed. Salient points drawn out during the discussions were:

- a. In many cases veterans would benefit from 'aiming higher' when seeking employment and apply for better paid jobs.
- b. Glasgow City Council appear to be making significant progress in support of veterans seeking employment.
- c. There is a lack of clarity regarding Qualifications and their equivalence in different parts of the UK. There are also instances of personnel using grants to 'civilianise' their existing qualifications.
- d. Progress is being made regarding the tracking of Early Service Leavers who leave the services before completing initial training.

- e. The initiative 'Troops into Teachers' was discussed, this appears to be progressing well in England and Wales but not in Scotland; the consensus of the meeting was that it is desirable to promote this scheme and to break down to barriers to it in Scotland.
6. AOCB: There was a brief discussion regarding prison in reach programmes for veterans in custody.
7. Dates of future meetings: Future meeting dates were agreed as:

3rd September

19th November

5th February

16th April

11th June

Before the Convenor closed the meeting, at approximately 8:00pm, he thanked those attending and contributing to the discussions, he also thanked Gillian Gillies for drawing together the administrative arrangements for the meeting.