

# **Transition Assistance: The Role of Certification**

**Second Annual Conference  
May 16-17, 2001**

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**Transition Assistance: The Role of Certification**  
**Summary of Events**

**Background**

This document provides an overview of the formal presentations made at the Second Annual Conference addressing the role of certification in the transition from military to civilian employment. This document does not attempt to provide a comprehensive report on the extensive information presented in the one and one half days devoted to formal presentations. During that time, there were 17 formal presentations that involved a total of 43 speakers. This document describes the 17 presentations, identifies the speakers participating in each, and attempts to excerpt the key themes from each presentation, without attempting to make specific attribution to the individual speakers in the case of those presentations that involved multiple speakers. A total of ten electronic slide presentations were associated with the information presented by the speakers and those electronic information resources are identified in conjunction with the description of each presentation.

The afternoon of the second day of the Conference was devoted to Breakout Sessions addressing six topics. Each topic was presented twice, so conference participants had the opportunity to attend the Breakout Sessions addressing the two topics that were of greatest interest to them. A separate report has been prepared for each of the six Breakout Session topics, and those reports are appended to this document. Electronic information resources also were associated with three of those sessions.

With respect to both the formal presentations and the Breakout Sessions, the extraction of key themes was based upon an analytical activity that is inherently subjective in character. Accordingly, any errors of fact or interpretation that have been introduced into the material summarized in this report and in the Breakout Session reports are the responsibility of the various DynCorp staff members who collaborated in preparing these reports.

**1. General Welcome and Purpose**

**Presenter:**

Steven Halsey, Partner, Halsey, Rains & Associates, LLC, Founder, Coalition for Professional Certification (CPC)

Mr. Halsey extended a warm welcome to all attending the Second Annual *Transition Assistance: The Role of Certification* Conference, on behalf of the Coalition for professional Certification (CPC), in partnership with the U. S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL/VETS), and the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Education Service (VA/ES). Mr. Halsey pointed out that the Coalition for Professional Certification (CPC) was

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founded in 1997 to represent the professional certification industry before the U. S. Congress and Federal Agencies. He noted that, in 1998, the CPC recognized the need for greater utilization of private sector certification and public licensure to facilitate the civilian sector employment prospects of veterans and transitioning military servicemembers. Mr. Halsey added that, in the past two years, the Congress has passed two CPC initiatives that directly impact veteran transition: the Professional Certification Advisory Board (PCAB) and the new Montgomery GI Bill benefit allowing for certification and licensure examination reimbursements.

Mr. Halsey pointed out that this year's conference is the second in a series of events designed to assist veterans, active duty military personnel, state and federal agencies, private sector employers and the certification/licensure communities in their efforts to improve the process for those who experience the transition from the military to the civilian sector. He added that the CPC is gratified to receive the support of so many in the public and private sectors, from the Congress, the Departments of Labor and Veterans' Affairs, corporate sponsors and certification and licensure experts in this important mission. Mr. Halsey expressed a note of particular appreciation to the distinguished keynote speaker, Congressman Jack Quinn, his colleagues, Congressmen Silvestre Reyes and J.D. Hayworth and to a very special guest, Department of Veterans' Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi. Mr. Halsey concluded his welcoming remarks by expressing the hope that all those attending the Conference would find it enlightening and would leave it with a renewed sense of purpose in the shared mission to improve the military-civilian transition process.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

## **2. Keynote Welcome**

**Presenter:**

Congressman Jack Quinn, Member, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Congressman Quinn opened the Conference, noting that he has been involved in matters related to veterans during his four terms in Congress. He pointed out that, although he no longer serves as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, he has retained his seat on the full Committee because veterans' issues are still a strong interest that he continues to pursue vigorously. Congressman Quinn pointed out that he maintains close communication with Congressman J.D. Hayworth, the current Chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits. He also mentioned that the Subcommittee would be holding hearings on veterans' education benefits and that Secretary Principi was scheduled to testify before the Subcommittee on that topic. Congressman Quinn pointed out three associates of his who were participating in the Conference: Mr. George Basher, with the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs; Dr. Joan Sulewski, with the Western New York Office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who is a member of his personal Advisory Group on Veterans' Matters that meets quarterly to

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advise him; and Helen Jacob, also with the Western New York Office of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Congressman Quinn expressed his appreciation to Steve Halsey, Laurie Rains, and Jim Hubbard for taking the initiative to sponsor the two Conferences addressing certification as an issue in the transition from military to civilian life. He pointed out that the first Conference, held in the spring of 2000, convened people from diverse sectors who have a common interest in this issue. He credited that first Conference with providing the stimulus for the benefit recently passed that provides servicemembers and veterans a reimbursement benefit for certification tests, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per test. He noted that this represents a tangible start and implied that other, related benefits may receive similar consideration in the future. He mentioned that he had met recently with Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and that he had taken that opportunity to express his support for the Conference. In closing, he expressed his appreciation for the accomplishments to date and introduced the next speaker, his colleague, Congressman Silvestre Reyes.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

### **3. Welcoming Remarks**

**Presenter:**

Congressman Silvestre Reyes, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Congressman Reyes was originally scheduled to present his remarks to open the second day of the Conference. However, in light of a conflict in his schedule that had arisen on that day, he expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to present his remarks on the opening day, immediately following the remarks by Congressman Quinn. Congressman Reyes expressed his personal appreciation for Congressman Quinn and complimented the bipartisan spirit of collaboration and collegiality that is characteristic of their many interactions on behalf of veterans. Congressman Reyes noted that he is a veteran, one of four in his family of ten brothers and sisters. He recounted his experience as a helicopter crew chief in Vietnam and emphasized the importance of assistance to those who have served.

Congressman Reyes indicated that, when he left military service in 1968, there was nothing comparable to the range of resources available to transitioning servicemembers today, but that he did feel that he and other veterans were well provided for. In his case, he pointed out that his military service was a stepping stone to his subsequent career of 26½ years in the U.S. Border Patrol. He underscored the importance of the fact that military service provides an opportunity for a young person to serve the country and experience a valuable maturing process.

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As an indication of his continuing involvement supporting military service, Congressman Reyes described a personal initiative that he undertakes each year in San Antonio, Texas. He explained that he takes a full week to visit high schools in the area, accompanied by representatives of all the military services. The purpose is to provide information about the benefits of military service and to encourage young people to consider enlisting in the military service of their choice. Congressman Reyes closed by pointing out that any activities undertaken to benefit veterans also benefit all of us and the rest of the country.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

#### **4. Overview of Significant Events**

**Presenter:**

Stan Seidel, Acting Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, U.S. Department of Labor

Mr. Seidel provided a historical overview of the key events in the development of the ongoing initiative to improve the interface between the military and civilian sectors with respect to licensing and certification. He discussed the positive information exchange that took place among the agencies participating in the Federal Interagency Task Force and pointed out that a timely issue for future consideration by that group is the extent to which improved prospects for civilian credentialing may serve to enhance recruitment and retention, compared to the extent to which these opportunities also may contribute to increased attrition. He closed by pointing out the dual challenge of coordinating the rapid rate of change in military specialties with the rapid rate of change in civilian credentialing.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

#### **5. Department of Labor Projects Panel**

**Presenters:**

Stan Seidel, Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
Pam Frugoli, Employment and Training Administration; O\*NET  
Dave Morman, Employment and Training Administration; America's Career Kit  
Anthony Swoope, Employment and Training Administration; Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services

The four speakers participating in this presentation represent a cross-section of the Department of Labor's organizational units relevant to the overall theme of the Conference. The organizations represented by Mr. Seidel and Mr. Swoope oversee the provision of employment and training services to workers and employers. The organizations represented by Mr. Morman

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and Ms. Frugoli provide a broad spectrum of information related to employment to the general public. An interesting illustration of the impact of new technology is that these four speakers identified a total of six major web sites that they maintain and make available to the general public as information resources that provide both general and specific information on a wide variety of topics relevant to employment and training, including licensing and certification for veterans and military servicemembers.

There are four electronic information resources available that accompanied this presentation.

**6. Panel of Pilot Projects Sponsored by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

**Presenters:**

Dale Wharf, LVER, Tennessee; Promoting Re-employment Opportunities for Veterans (PROVET) Pilot Project  
Ray Pryor, LVER, Ohio; Licensing and Certification State Pilot Project  
Edgar Williams, DVOP, Virginia; CompTIA Skills Training Pilot Project

All three speakers addressed their experiences implementing geographically focused pilot projects. A common theme of these speakers was that a substantial payoff in skill transfer and wages results from improving the interface between the military and civilian sectors with respect to licensing and certification. This improvement is brought about by efforts that could be called translation, mediation or brokering. This function operates in both directions because civilian employers, labor unions, and credentialing organizations benefit from an improved understanding of military training, education, and experience. Conversely, military servicemembers benefit from improved information on civilian employment requirements in general, and licensing and certification requirements in particular.

Two of the three pilots focused on information technology skills and emphasized help desk, web development, telecommunications and database skills. The third pilot was more broadly based across a wider range of occupations and developed an emphasis upon commercial drivers' licenses. A common theme of all three pilots was that improved information exchange, refresher training, and training to address skill gaps produced highly positive results with respect to skill enhancement, reduction of the length of transitional unemployment, and especially, increased wages.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

## **7. Armed Forces Panel**

### **Presenters:**

Brigadier General Katherine Frost, Adjutant General, U.S. Army  
Captain Grant Leber, Director of Training, U.S. Coast Guard  
Ms. Peggy Johnson, Director of U.S. Military Apprenticeship Program, U.S. Navy  
Vernon Taylor, Director, Education Service Program, U.S. Marine Corps

As the speaker from the Coast Guard pointed out during this presentation, there are five Armed Services, four of which are under the Department of Defense, while the fifth Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, is under the Department of Transportation. Four of the five Armed Services were represented at the Conference. Taken together, their presentations reinforced two key themes those staff representing federal civilian agencies on the Federal Interagency Task Force had previously become familiar with:

- In addition to the “regular” training, education, and work experience that enlisted personnel receive to prepare them to perform their military occupational specialties, the Armed Services provide many additional training, education, and credentialing enhancements that servicemembers can take advantage of in order to prepare for employment in the civilian sector.
- The number and types of enhancements offered and the ways that they are interrelated are different within each of the Armed Services, with the result that each Service tends to present a unique profile of enhancements and to prize this distinct character as a reflection of each Service’s unique mission and identity.

Included among the supplementary offerings of the Armed Services, the following were noted by the speakers participating in this presentation:

- Career degrees that build directly upon an enlisted servicemembers' military occupational specialty;
- Other courses and degrees that reflect the personal choices of enlisted personnel rather than their assigned military occupational specialty;
- American Council on Education (ACE) equivalency levels for military training and experience so that enlisted personnel can receive credit from institutions of higher education;
- Optional training resources available in various information technology skill areas;



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- Opportunities for servicemembers to participate in registered apprenticeship programs during their military service;
- Opportunities for servicemembers from all five Armed Forces who have military training, education, and experience as airframe and power plant mechanics to take advantage of a detailed crosswalk to the civilian licensing requirements administered by the Federal Aviation Administration in these occupational areas;
- Tuition assistance programs that largely defray the out-of-pocket cost for supplementary education and training enhancements;
- Web pages to disseminate various types of information to servicemembers;
- Direct access on many military bases to a wide variety of licensing and certification examinations made available by the Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) through coordination with the testing centers maintained by the Services on major installations; and
- Availability of documentation of military training, education, and experience that are customized in format by the Services, tailored to each individual servicemember's experiences, and made available in addition to standardized documentation, such as the DD Form 214, Certificate of Discharge and the DD Form 2586, Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET).

The presentations by these speakers made clear the challenge that faces the civilian credentialing organizations seeking to improve organizational interfaces and individual transitions. Some key components of this challenge include: 1) unique features of the military mission; 2) the complexity of a single Service's requirements and resources; 3) the uniqueness of each Service and the diversity among them; and 4) the prevalence of technical terminology, jargon, and acronyms, some of which are unique to the individual Services and some of which are common to the military "culture."

The closing remarks by one speaker in this presentation included an admission that the professionals responsible for education and training with the Armed Services are having difficulty "getting their arms around" the complexity and diversity of civilian requirements for licensing and certification. Without quibbling over the precise parity of the challenge that each group present to the other, there is little doubt that the organizations responsible for civilian licensing and certifications are having their own difficulty "getting their arms around" the formidable complexity and the daunting diversity of activities undertaken by the Armed Services that relate directly and indirectly to civilian licensing and certification.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

## **8. Legislative Briefing on the Montgomery G.I. Bill Benefit**

**Presenter:**

Laurie Rains, Partner, Halsey, Rains & Associates, LLC

A topic of particular interest and of focus at this year's conference was the passage and enactment of legislation making it possible for servicemembers and veterans who are eligible to participate in the Montgomery GI Bill benefit program to obtain reimbursement for the cost of certification and licensing examinations.

The Coalition for Professional Certification (CPC) first began its work on this issue in the summer of 1995 with a hearing before the House Committee on Small Business dealing with sole source bid requirements and the treatment of small businesses in the field of professional certification. Since that time, CPC has worked closely with the House and Senate Committees on Small Business, the Small Business Administration, the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Labor. In addition, this is the second annual transition conference for veterans organized under CPC's auspices. Accordingly, it was pointed out that the CPC has reason to be proud of its leadership role in the area of professional certification before the Federal Government and the Congress.

With the support of congressional committees and federal agencies, The CPC created a proposal to take to the Hill that would benefit the Nation's servicemembers, veterans and the professional certification industry. The CPC worked with the committees to draft language supporting that proposal and now incorporated into what is Public Law 106-419. In this process, the CPC was very fortunate to have established a strong working relationship Congressman Jack Quinn, Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee. While working on the language CPC was encouraged by the strong support of the professional committee staff from both political parties and in both Chambers of the Congress.

The new licensing and certification benefit allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to reimburse a servicemember or veteran, if eligible, for a licensure or certification examination. The examination must be approved by the VA to be reimbursable. A number of certifying organizations have been applying for acceptance during recent months, and many more are expected to do so in the near future. The State Approving Agency employees are handling this process. It should be made clear that the VA can only reimburse for the cost of the test, up to \$2000 per test, not the costs for coursework or materials.

In addition to the creation of a new benefit under MGIB for examination reimbursement, the legislation established the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee. The

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Committee shall advise the Secretary with respect to the requirements of organizations or entities offering licensing and certification test to individuals for which payment for such tests may be made. Members of the Committee are to be appointed by the Secretary and are not to exceed seven members, according to the enacted legislation.

The enacted legislation went further by creating the first set of federal guidance standards for the evaluation of professional certification programs. These standards were drafted by the CPC and best referred to as "minimal guidance standards". They were written to establish a criteria that would assure the reimbursement benefit only be made available for examinations associated with quality certification organizations.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

**9. Department of Veterans Affairs Panel**

**Presenters:**

Dennis Douglass, Deputy Director, Education Service

Bill Susling, Assistant Director for Policy and Program Development, Education Service

Julius Williams, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service

The speakers participating in this panel addressed two benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The first is the certification examination cost reimbursement benefit, identified previously. The second is the Agency's comprehensive vocational rehabilitation program, which is available to qualifying disabled veterans.

With respect to the examination reimbursement benefit, it was pointed out that detailed information on this new benefit would be provided in three different topical Breakout Sessions scheduled to take place in the afternoon of the second day of the Conference. In an overview of the new provisions, the start date of the new benefit, March 1, 2001 was identified. In addition, it was noted that the new benefit is not available to those whose participation in the G.I. Bill program is based upon their service in the Selected Reserve or National Guard. It was further noted that for those who are eligible for the new benefit, examinations for renewal of certifications are eligible for reimbursement, along with examinations for initial certifications, within the participating individual's period of eligibility for the overall education benefit.

An explanation also was provided of the general procedure required for a certifying organization or licensing agency to obtain approval of its examination for reimbursement. Since 1944, the Department of Veterans Affairs has relied upon State Approving Agencies in each state to review and approve the educational and training curricula that qualify for reimbursement under the various education benefit programs enacted since World War II. In accord with provisions of

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the new legislation, the Department of Veterans Affairs has elected to use this same network of state agencies to approve the examinations that qualify for the new benefit. A certification or licensing examination that is approved by the agency in the state that is considered to be the "home" state for that examination will be eligible for reimbursement nationwide, with no further approvals required.

With respect to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, it was pointed out that this intensive and comprehensive program serves about 63,000 disabled veterans each year, providing them with independent living and employability skills. For those participating in this specific program, payment of costs for certification or licensing examinations was authorized by prior legislation. It was pointed out that a recent Executive Order required federal agencies to increase by 100,000 their hiring of disabled individuals and that the disabled veterans rehabilitated under this program should prove to be suitable candidates for a number of those new openings.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

**10. Luncheon Presentation - Day One**

**Presenter:**

Anthony J. Principi, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Mr. Principi pointed out that today's transitioning servicemembers do not have the luxury of entering the civilian workforce with inadequate preparation. Nor should they expect to encounter unnecessary red tape in negotiating their transition to civilian employment. The Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, chaired by Mr. Principi, enunciated three key principles applicable to the military-civilian transition:

- Veterans should have access to opportunities;
- Veterans should have available the means to take advantage of those opportunities; and
- Veterans should expect to encounter transparent boundaries between agencies offering transition services.

He pointed out that the Federal Interagency Task Force had expressed an interest in the enactment of an examination fee benefit and that P.L. 106-419 provided a positive response to that interest. He indicated that the Second Annual Conference can provide a "jumping off point" for a number of related initiatives in support of transition. He noted that servicemembers demonstrate daily high standards of performance and are prepared to risk their lives in carrying out their responsibilities. In return, they ask only a fair chance in the civilian workforce. A

successful transition is essential to that fair chance and the absence of that basic opportunity could create a disincentive to military service, an outcome that would be unfavorable to the protection of America's freedom. In closing, he encouraged all those involved to work together to maximize the likelihood that transitioning servicemembers will encounter "green lights" rather than "red lights" as they negotiate the transition from military service to civilian employment.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

## **11. Workforce Investment Panel**

### **Presenters:**

Rex Hall, National Association of State Workforce Agencies  
Susan Carreon, National Council on Occupational Education

The speakers for this presentation represent two key segments of the state and local organizational infrastructure responsible for worker preparation. On the one hand, this includes the network of public community colleges in every state, each system and institution with its own extensive array of curricula oriented to the workforce needs of employers in the respective state and local areas. On the other hand, this also includes the network of public agencies involved in employability development, such as the public employment service agencies and the public job training agencies. These two segments of the worker preparation infrastructure currently are confronted with the variety of rapid changes underway within the economy. These include the rapid growth of information technology occupations, the similarly rapid growth in professional certifications, and a shortage of required skills in the pool of prospective workers seeking employment.

Faced with these challenges, those involved in occupational education find their institutions "struggling to keep up" with the rapid changes underway. As they seek to reconcile and accommodate the differing characteristics of education-based versus industry-based credentialing, occupational educators have identified a set of "model characteristics" of occupational credentialing:

- Validity,
- Reliability,
- Portability,
- Flexibility, and
- Comprehensiveness.

Within this context, the occupational education community is engaging in discussion and debate regarding future directions and is identifying best practices in this area.

The network of public workforce development agencies also is undergoing a period of transformation. The primary stimulus for change in this area has been the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. This legislation prescribes a higher degree of integration between the labor exchange and job training components of the employability development infrastructure in order to promote greater “user-friendliness” for workers seeking services. The legislation also seeks to promote higher levels of employer involvement and empowerment at the state and local level. Although the legislation was enacted in 1998, pilot implementation of the key structural elements of the legislation has been underway since 1994. In light of the magnitude of the changes envisioned, as well as the speed of change achieved to date, it would not be unfair to attribute to the workforce development segment the same “struggling to keep up” characterization that was applied to the occupational education segment of the state and local worker preparation infrastructure.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

## **12. Certifying Organizations Panel**

### **Presenters:**

Dr. Gerry Boe, American Medical Technologists  
Ken Bassett, National Electrical Testing Association  
Louise Wehrle, American Society of Military Comptrollers  
Hal Steinberg, Association of Government Accounts  
Don Fedder, Board of Orthotist/Prosthetist Certification  
Dawn Cassidy, National Council on Family Relations  
Mike Clark, National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies  
Susan Dorn, American Board of Medical Specialties in Podiatry

The eight speakers participating in this presentation illustrated in a very concrete way the high level of diversity that prevails among certifying organizations. While each speaker provided a considerable amount of information, the majority of the information provided in each case was highly specific and unique to the respective certifying organization. The difficulty presented by this set of organizations in extracting an extensive amount of information on “key themes” for the purposes of this report is not the significant observation. Rather, the significant observation is the clarity with which this set of certifying organizations embodies the highly diverse, highly specialized and highly idiosyncratic features that seem to characterize certifying organizations as a group.

Of the eight organizations represented in this presentation, three offer certifications in health/medical occupations, three offer certifications in management/services occupations and two offer certifications in technological occupational and product areas. Of the eight, four mentioned the number of years that the organization had been in operation. This ranged from

more than 80 years for the oldest, to less than two years for the youngest, with the other two just over 60 years. Of the eight, four also commented on the relative ease or difficulty that their organizations experienced in relating to the occupational information on training, education, and experience provided by the Armed Services. Of the four speakers who commented on this dimension, only one reported a high degree of smoothness in relating to this information and that speaker noted that his organization had established a committee for that specific purpose over 40 years ago. The other three speakers noted varying degrees of difficulty in “getting their arms around” the training, education, and work experience practices of the Armed Forces, based upon the information available to them.

Anecdotal information provided by these speakers highlighted the complexity, the technical sophistication, and the variety in requirements that characterize certifying organizations. Anecdotal information also provided a glimpse of the fierce competition that sometimes exists between certifying organizations operating in the same occupational areas. This anecdotal information also revealed the tendency for this competition to erupt over recognition by state licensing agencies, as well as over recognition by federal agencies with credentialing requirements, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs in its hospitals and clinics.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

### **13. Construction Industry Apprenticeship Panel**

**Presenters:**

Graham Brent, Executive Director, National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators

Joe Maloney, Building Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Bill Duke, Laborers' International Union of North America

Dave Treanor, International Union of Operating Engineers

Donald Ball, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada

Vince Panvini, Sheet Metal Workers International Association

The six speakers in this presentation had much in common and voiced a number of common themes. All the speakers were affiliated, in different ways, with registered apprenticeship programs, operated under joint management-labor auspices, within the construction industry. From that common background, the following themes emerged:

- The demand for construction industry workers is increasing and the supply of entry level workers in these skilled trades is not keeping pace with this increased demand.

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- The professionals responsible for training in the construction trades have high regard for veterans, particularly with regard to their generic attributes, such as maturity and responsibility.
- The joint labor-management training organizations in the construction industry make major financial investments in their training facilities and personnel and thereby offer aspiring workers in these trades top quality training opportunities.
- The training provided through these programs focuses upon experiential learning through on-the-job training/employment, supplemented by classroom skill training and classroom instruction in theory, a combination that, in some programs, leads to the award of an A.A. degree in conjunction with completion of the apprenticeship.
- Employment in the construction industry pays generally high hourly wages and includes the potential for significant career advancement.
- Employment in the construction industry, particularly in the organized sector, typically includes a full benefits package, including a pension benefit.
- Registered apprenticeship programs typically qualify for payment of veterans' educational benefits, which are received in addition to the apprentice level wages paid for the on-the-job training/employment component of the apprenticeship.
- Apprentices in the construction trades do encounter the undesirable aspects of this type of work including seasonal employment, strenuous physical demands, exposure to the elements, and plain old dirt and grime, with the result that the rate of attrition is relatively high.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.



#### **14. Identification of Stakeholder Groups, Key Issues, and Information Needs**

**Presenters:**

Ed Davin, DynCorp  
Lisa Lutz, DynCorp

This presentation was based upon an analysis of comment cards turned in at the end of the first day of the Conference. In addition, the list of conference participants was used to categorize the organizational affiliations of those attending. The resulting information included:

- A profile of the different types of organizations represented at the Conference;
- The principal issues that had surfaced during the first day of the Conference;
- The information needs identified after one day by those attending; and
- Identification of the key stakeholder groups involved in certification and transition.

A summary of the information provided in these four categories is presented below.

There are four types of organizations that were relatively well represented at this year's Conference:

- Certifying organizations,
- Armed Services and other defense sector agencies,
- Public agencies and private organizations representing various aspects of the interests of veterans, and
- Other federal, state, and local agencies and organizations.

There are two types of organizations that were not well represented at this year's Conference:

- Employers/management/human resources professionals, and
- Organized labor.

During the first day of this year's Conference, the following key issues were identified by the participants:

- The need to determine the comparability between military training/education/work experience and civilian credentialing requirements so that gaps can be clearly identified and addressed;
- The need to develop improved channels and methods for disseminating information to servicemembers and veterans;

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- The need for certifying organizations to understand and comply with VA requirements governing eligibility for reimbursement of examination costs;
- The need for improved approaches for accreditation of certifying organization;
- The need for improved communication among the different types of organizations and individuals involved in certification and transition; and
- The need for greater standardization of credentialing requirements and increased centralization of available information on the existing requirements.

At the end of the first day of this year's Conference, participants identified needs for information of the following types:

- The similarities and differences in occupational requirements and work experience between the Armed Services and the civilian sector;
- The VA approval and reimbursement processes applicable to the reimbursement of costs for certification examinations;
- Available methods for disseminating information to servicemembers and veterans;
- Key characteristics of occupational credentialing in the civilian sector;
- The number of servicemembers within the various occupational specialty areas and the number of civilian workers holding various types of civilian sector credentials; and
- Tangible evidence of the value to employers and workers of civilian occupational credentials.

Based upon the information available, it is possible to identify the following stakeholder groups among the organizations represented at the Conference:

- Civilian credentialing organizations;
- Armed Services and other defense sector organizations;
- Organizations representing the interests of veterans;
- Industry organizations, including those representing both management and labor perspectives, and
- Other federal, state, and local agencies and organizations.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

## **15. Panel on State Licensing and Its Linkages with Other Dimensions of Credentialing**

### **Presenters:**

Roy Swift, Ph.D., Consultant  
Arthur Schwartz, National Society of Professional Engineers

This presentation focused upon state licensing as a system of worker credentialing. Three aspects of licensing were addressed:

- The characteristics of state licensing;
- The key difference between licensing and professional certification, coupled with the interrelationships of these with other components of civilian worker credentialing; and
- Challenges in seeking recognition of military training, education, and work experience for state licensing.

These aspects are summarized below.

With respect to the characteristics of state licensing, the following were noted:

- The occupational scope addressed by state licenses is determined by legislative bodies operating separately within each state;
- The state level of decision making frequently leads to a lack of consistency across states in the requirements for licenses within the same general occupational areas; and
- The lack of consistency in licensing requirements tends to be compounded by a relatively low level of communication among state licensing boards.

It was pointed out that academic credentialing, professional certification, and state licensing each tend to reflect different emphases in their requirements, different terminology in their communications, and different vested interests in their organizational priorities. Despite these differences, it also was pointed out that state licensing provides an arena within which all three of these credentialing systems interact with each other. This is simply due to the fact that many state licensing requirements call for academic degrees from accredited institutions, as well as professional certification by a recognized certifying organization. It was pointed out that this confluence of the three credentialing systems actually involves four distinct types of organizations:

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- Education institutions,
- Accrediting bodies,
- Certifying organizations, and
- State licensing agencies.

With respect to the interface between worker preparation in the military and state licensing, the following can be noted:

- It is challenging for the Armed Services and the individual servicemembers to relate to and accommodate the wide variety of licensing requirements.
- State licensing agencies may not possess the flexibility that the Services and servicemembers would like since their discretionary authority may be sharply constrained by statutory provisions.
- State licensing agencies are likely to find the “language barrier” to be formidable when reviewing military documentation in an effort to identify equivalencies, especially with respect to work experience gained during military service.
- When the number of servicemembers separating annually is divided into the number of occupational specialties represented, and then further subdivided by the number of state licensing agencies with jurisdiction within each occupational area, it is clear that, for most state licensing agencies, the “critical mass” of military applicants that would tend to incentivize greater efforts to overcome the “language barrier” simply does not exist in many occupational areas.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

## **16. Panel on Data Gathering**

**Presenter:**

Edith MacArthur, Washington Statistical Society

Ms. MacArthur represented the Washington Statistical Society, which is the chapter of the American Statistical Association that serves the Washington, D.C. area. The Washington Statistical Society’s constituency includes professionals from the government, the academic sector, and the private sector.

The focus of Ms. MacArthur’s presentation was on the data gap that exists in the area of individuals’ experiences with various types of non-traditional education, including certification. As certification and other forms of credentialing have become more prevalent and are

increasingly used as prerequisites for employment, there has been a new interest in tabulating data on this topic. However, national surveys have not typically had specific questions in this area so data are not readily available.

Federal government statisticians and survey developers are attempting to address the data gap through the development of survey questions that will allow an assessment of the types of credentials individuals have obtained, how they have attained them, and the impact of attainment on employment. However, there are a number of complexities and challenges related to gathering this type of data, foremost of which is the lack of standardized terminology related to credentials. Professionals in the fields of education, both traditional and non-traditional, often do not use the same terminology or categorization of the various types of credentials. Thus, it is difficult to develop survey questions for the general public that will accurately convey the type of information that is sought.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.

## **17. National Skill Standards Board Panel**

### **Presenters:**

Dave Wilcox, National Skill Standards Board  
Ellen Scully, Manufacturing Skills Standards Council

This presentation provided a general orientation to the National Skill Standards Board and provided specific information about developmental activity currently underway through the Board's sponsorship in one sector of the civilian economy. The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) was established by federal legislation in 1994. The focus of NSSB's activities is to encourage representatives of industry to come together, within industry-specific groups, to identify the scope and character of the skilled labor needs and requirements within the respective industries. This is intended to provide guidance to the institutions within the education and training infrastructure so that they can better respond to and address the industry's need for skilled workers. This also is intended to assist workers to acquire skills and documentation of those skills in order to assist them with mobility across jobs, with advancement within career paths, and with management of their own careers.

Operationally, industry activities in pursuit of these objectives are anticipated to occur within 14 industrial sectors of the U.S. economy. Within each sector, the key fruits of the activities of industry representatives are:

- Skill standards that specify various types of skill requirements within an industry sector;

- Assessments that validate worker skills and competencies within specified areas and at established levels; and
- Certificates that provide occupational credentials for workers that are recognized throughout an industry sector.

An example was provided describing how the development of a system along these lines is progressing within the manufacturing industry sector. The system has been designed to accommodate all 14 types of manufacturing organizations included within the manufacturing sector (such as, furniture, chemicals, machinery, etc.). The system also is designed to focus on organizations and practices that meet “high performance” criteria. In order to encompass the wide diversity and complexity of this industry sector, the skill standards, the assessments, and the certificates are organized within five “concentrations” or functional skill areas (such as production, logistics and inventory control, quality assurance, etc.).

The skills standards vision is broad in scope and long-term in character. The NSSB could come to assist with the transition of servicemembers to civilian employment if certifying organizations come to align themselves within its overarching framework and come to adopt some of the standardization of its structural elements. In turn, existing certifying organizations could come to provide “building blocks” for the development of the NSSB concept in untapped industrial sectors in order to avoid the inefficiencies of “starting from scratch” and “reinventing the wheel.” These developments, in turn, could help to provide an overall national framework for professional certification. Given the national character of the Armed Services, the eventual maturing of the NSSB model could provide increased opportunities for a “national to national” interface that could help to bring about somewhat greater standardization of practices and terminology, and somewhat greater centralization of key information. These improvements could help to make the process of obtaining credentials for the transition to the civilian workforce somewhat less complicated, less confusing and less daunting to the servicemember who is planning or negotiating that transition.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

## **18. Helping Military Spouses Meet Employment Challenges: An Opportunity to Improve Military Retention Rates**

**Presenter:**

Beth Holst, Career Navy Spouse

To the Navy servicemember, the acronym SOA means “speed of advance” and to that servicemember’s spouse it means “starting over AGAIN!” Of the active duty military force in 1999, 54 percent were married. The spouses of these servicemembers face a number of

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formidable challenges as they seek to pursue employment within the context of their family responsibilities. Frequent transfers disrupt prospects for continuity and advancement in employment. Deployments of servicemembers leave spouses to handle work and family responsibilities alone. Other constraints compound these problems, such as the necessity to “follow later” when the servicemember is transferred, in order to provide the additional time required to sell a house or to permit children to finish a school year where they began it.

Despite these obstacles, the proportion of military spouses pursuing employment has increased dramatically in recent years. Between 1987 and 1997, the proportion of spouses of enlisted personnel who were in the labor force increased by over 50 percent, from 56 percent to 87 percent. During that same period of time, the unemployment rate for this group doubled, from 12 percent to 24 percent. Despite this high level of unemployment, a recent survey indicated that only 10 percent of the spouses of junior enlisted personnel take advantage of a spouse employment assistance program sponsored by the Department of Defense. The speaker stated that this low rate of participation is due to lack of awareness of the program.

The unemployment statistics also do not reflect the rate of underemployment among those military spouses who are employed. For example, spouses who are teachers often abandon that career because of the frequent relocations, the different certification requirements in each state, and the loss of seniority with each transfer. Instead, many military spouses settle for jobs that provide lower pay and lower job satisfaction than those they qualify for but that has the advantage of being easier to obtain and relinquish as transfers occur.

For families of enlisted personnel, financial precariousness is indicated by the fact that 67 percent of junior enlisted families have less than \$1,000 in savings, and the same is true for 50 percent of senior enlisted families. Within this somewhat bleak economic context, there does appear to be a glimmer of hope. Specifically it appears that wider availability of Internet resources, and the associated flexibility of job opportunities, may enhance the employment prospects of military spouses.

With the available pool of servicemembers stretched very thin in recent years due to decreased staffing and increased deployments, military retention rates are declining in a number of occupational specialty categories. Within that context, any increases in the available level of employment assistance and in the number of employment opportunities for military spouses could help to stabilize the economic and social stability of some military families and thereby counteract, to some extent, the forces that are tending to drain the Armed Forces of their qualified personnel.

There is an electronic information resource available that accompanied this presentation.

**19. Keynote Luncheon – Day Two**

**Presenter:**

Congressman Jack Quinn, Member, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Congressman Quinn expressed his pleasure about the informative and productive nature of the Conference. He recognized that the issues that were addressed at the Conference are tough and that players will not always agree on approaches and solutions. However, he encouraged the participants to keep talking to each other. The Congressman stated that he hopes the success of the first and second annual conferences will lead to a third and indicated that he expects Congress to continue its bipartisan interest in the area. He pointed out that the only argument related to the new provisions of the Montgomery GI Bill was that it was not enough.

Congressman Quinn concluded by thanking Steve Halsey and Laurie Rains of Halsey, Rains, and Associates, LLC and the representatives of the Coalition for Professional Certification for their assistance in formulating the bill, and he presented them with a red-lined version of the bill signed by the President.

There is no electronic information resource available for this presentation.



**Breakout Session 1**  
**“How To Get Your Certification Program On The Approved List**  
**For Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) Reimbursement”**

**Session Leader:** Giles Larrabee, DVA  
Frank Hatcher, Consultant

**Session Format:** This was primarily an informational session during which Mr. Larrabee informed the attendees of the requirements for getting a certification program on the MGIB approved for reimbursement list. Mr. Larrabee reviewed the published criteria for approval. This was followed by a brief question and answer session. (Note: **BOLD** print pertains to all organizations and entities offering licensing and certification tests. Normal print refers to additional approval requirements that organizations and entities offering licensing and certification tests must meet if they are not part of the Federal government, a State government, or a political subdivision of a State. *Italicized* print refers to an approval requirement that the State approving agency may impose on an organization or entity offering licensing or certification tests.)

**Requirements for Tests**

- (1) Subject to paragraph (2), a licensing or certification test is approved for purposes of this section only if -
  - (A) **the test is required under Federal, State, or local law or regulation for an individual to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession; or**
  - (B) the Secretary determines that the test is generally accepted, in accordance with relevant government, business, or industry standards, employment policies, or hiring practices, as attesting to a level of knowledge or skill required to qualify to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession.
- (2) A licensing or certification test offered by a State, or a political subdivision of a State, is deemed approved by the Secretary for purposes of this section.

**Requirements for Organizations or Entities Offering Tests**

- (1) Each organization or entity that is not an entity of the United States, a State, or political subdivision of a State, that offers a licensing or certification test for which payment may be made under chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title and that meets the following requirements, shall be approved by the Secretary to offer such test:
  - (A) The organization or entity certifies to the Secretary that the licensing or certification test offered by the organization or entity is generally accepted, in accordance with relevant government, business, or industry standards, employment policies, or hiring practices, as attesting to a level of knowledge or skill required to qualify to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession.
  - (B) The organization or entity is licensed, chartered, or incorporated in a State and has offered the test for a minimum of two years before the date on which the organization or entity first submits to the Secretary an application for approval under this section.
  - (C) The organization or entity employs, or consults with, individuals with expertise or substantial experience with respect to all areas of knowledge or skill that are measured by the test and that are required for the license or certificate issued.
  - (D) The organization or entity has no direct financial interest in -
    - (i) the outcome of the test; or
    - (ii) organizations that provide the education or training of candidates for licenses or certificates required for vocations or professions.
  - (E) The organization or entity maintains appropriate records with respect to all candidates who take the test for a period prescribed by the Secretary, but in no case for a period of less than three years.**
  - (F)**
    - (i) The organization or entity promptly issues notice of the results of the test to the candidate for the license or certificate.**
    - (ii) The organization or entity has in place a process to review complaints submitted against the organization or entity with respect to the test or the process for obtaining a license or certificate required for vocations or professions.**
  - (G) The organization or entity furnishes to the Secretary such information with respect to the test as the Secretary requires to determine whether payment may be made for the test under chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, including**

**personal identifying information, fee payment, and test results. Such information shall be furnished in the form prescribed by the Secretary.**

**(H) The organization or entity furnishes to the Secretary the following information:**

**(i) A description of the licensing or certification test offered by the organization or entity, including the purpose of the test, the vocational, professional, governmental, and other entities that recognize the test, and the license or certificate issued upon successful completion of the test.**

**(ii) The requirements to take the test, including the amount of the fee charged for the test and any prerequisite education, training, skills, or other certification.**

**(iii) The period for which the license or certificate awarded upon successful completion of the test is valid, and the requirements for maintaining or renewing the license or certificate.**

*(I) Upon request of the Secretary, the organization or entity furnishes such information to the Secretary that the Secretary determines necessary to perform an assessment of -*

*(i) the test conducted by the organization or entity as compared to the level of knowledge or skills that a license or certificate attests; and*

*(ii) the applicability of the test over such periods of time as the Secretary determines appropriate.*

(2) With respect to each organization or entity that is an entity of the United States, a State, or a political subdivision of a State, that offers a licensing or certification test for which payment may be made under chapters 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, the following provisions of paragraph (1) shall apply to the entity: subparagraphs (E), (F), (G), and (H).

## **Glossary**

**LICENSURE** - government sanctioned credentialing

**CERTIFICATION** - voluntary action of an occupational or professional group to grant recognition to those who have met some stated level of training & experience

**CLEAR** - Council on Licensure, Enforcement, & Regulation

**NSSB** - National Skill Standards Board (business & industry developing national system of skill standards for "industry sectors" - e.g. construction, mining, transportation)

**CPC** - Coalition for Professional Certification

**NOCA** - National Organization for Competency Assurance

**Breakout Session #2**

**“Informing the Veteran Community that Certification and Licensure Expenses May be Reimbursed Under the MGIB”**

**Session Leaders:** Lee Hudson, Department of Veterans Affairs  
Heather Higgins, Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
Jim Hubbard, Halsey, Rains & Associates, LLC

**Session Format:** 1. To generate a list of problems and issues that may stand in the way of informing the veteran and active duty personnel about the certification and licensure benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill, and;  
2. To identify strategies/solutions to address the issues listed in number one (1) above.

**Facilitator:** Jimmy Johnson, DynCorp

**Informing Prior to Separation from Military**

<b>Problem/Issue</b>	<b>Suggested Solutions</b>
1. Recruits are uninformed/misinformed during recruitment process about all possible benefits, even though a majority elect to contribute to educational benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better educate recruiters about MGIB benefits.</li><li>• Change recruiters focus from stressing \$ for college, to \$ for education, OJT, vocational training, licensing/certification and college.</li><li>• Change recruiters focus from promoting use of educational benefit after separation toward use while on active duty, to use in conjunction with military training, to achieve certification and be prepared for transition.</li></ul>
2. Legislated barriers to informing active military to benefit prior to 180 days before separation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact Military Base CO's directly to obtain permission.</li><li>• Offer to provide a presentation about benefit as part of weekly GMT (General Military Training).</li></ul>
3. Separation counseling process not effective in communicating available benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So much is communicated during these sessions that personnel are overloaded with information and don't retain much of it; Perhaps information could be communicated a little at a time.</li><li>• Conduct assessment as part of separation counseling to identify skills/interests and where appropriate, explain potential for obtaining certification in appropriate fields.</li><li>• NVTI should include information about MGIB as part of training provided to DVOP's &amp; LVER's, so they will be qualified to inform separating personnel about benefits, rather than relying on others to follow up with information.</li></ul>

### Informing Veterans

Problem/Issue	Suggested Solutions
1. Educational providers not providing information to veterans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure veterans' representatives at educational institutions are familiar with benefit and encourage them to do outreach, in addition to certifying veterans for benefits.</li> </ul>
2. Difficulty in reaching minority populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minorities are not traditionally members of VSO's, so marketing could be targeted to media that has high minority draw and participation (radio stations, churches, etc.)</li> </ul>
3. Provider of benefit traditionally responsible for informing vets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage power of educational providers and employers to assist in informing veterans:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Educational providers are competing for students; have them do outreach/advertising.</li> <li>– Have potential employers screen applicants for veterans status and inform vets about benefit availability.</li> <li>– Unions and professional organizations could boost membership by direct outreach to qualified vets.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4. Prep courses for certification/licensure not reimbursable under MGIB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If included as part of overall educational plan, rather than standing alone, training may be reimbursable.</li> </ul>
5. Many qualified certifying/licensing bodies not aware that benefit is available, or do not know requirements to get certification approved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen outreach to include professional organizations, certifying bodies, etc. in addition to veterans outreach.</li> </ul>

**Of Additional Note:**

During the course of the breakout sessions, some comments were made that were of interest and inspired additional discussion. Although they did not directly relate to the subject being discussed, they are included here so they are not lost.

“Would you rather risk training an individual and having them leave, or not training them, and having them stay?”

“How many people at this session are now employed in the field they were initially trained?”

## **Breakout Session #3**

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### **Breakout Session #3**

#### **“How to Inform and Education the HR Community on the New MGIB Benefit”**

**Session Leaders:** John Pearson, VA Education Service  
Julia Hillier, Executive Director of Cardiovascular Credentialing International

**Facilitator:** Ruth Carstens, DynCorp

John presented an overview of the VA education benefits available to separating service men and women, specifically: MGIB (Montgomery G.I. Bill), VEAP (Veterans Educational Assistance Program), DEA (Dependents Educational Assistance), and MGIB-SR (Montgomery G.I. Bill for Selected Reserve). He described the specific benefits included in the MGIB and explained that veterans must apply for these benefits to find out if they are eligible.

Julia addressed the situation of the number of veterans separating from the military over the past decade and how HR managers are not really aware of all of the advantages of hiring military veterans. Most veterans are young, possess good technical skills and abilities, practice a good work ethic, and are in excellent health. These advantages, in addition to paid certification, make veterans very desirable as a source of employees.

The challenge becomes: 1) How do we promote veterans to HR in private industry and government? 2) How do we get HR managers to learn about these new GI benefits?

Participants in the sessions offered several interesting perspectives about how to address this. One is to work from the military side to set policy at a higher level than is currently practiced. A suggestion was to form some type of veteran employment advisory group at the DoD level to enforce policy from a higher level. The idea is that transition activities and training are more likely to be a priority if there is a common mandate for all of the armed services.

Another idea is to invite selected industry HR representatives, where transferability of skills seems high, to the base to actually see what the service men and women do. They can better visualize how these skills might be used in that industry if they have observed it themselves. Another idea was to look at the entire HR community, which is too broad to target, and break it down into industry segments. Segments might include: Health Care, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Franchisers, State and Local Government, Association Management, etc. Then, outreach can be targeted to these specific segments through providing speakers at meetings and conferences, newsletter articles, and web sites. The outreach would include publicizing the MGIB benefits and the advantages of hiring veterans in that industry area.

An idea for state and local governments, or the Chamber of Commerce, is to include hiring veterans as part of an economic development strategy. This may be done by: 1) identifying occupational classifications; 2) identifying specific skills; 3) developing industry support systems; 4) developing the military as an economic development industry.

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It was agreed that this issue of how to better inform and educate the HR community about the MGIB needs a great deal more attention. This is only the beginning of developing strategies to accomplish this.

**Breakout Session #4**  
**“Open Forum on Issues/Strategies and Discussion of Next Steps”**

**Session Leader:** Ed Davin, DynCorp, Facilitator

**Session Format:** Open discussion in response to the interests of those attending. Differences in the affiliations and interests of those attending the two sessions led to very different discussions, which are reported separately below.

**I. TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING FIRST BREAKOUT SESSION**

The first Breakout Session in this category was attended by a small number of conference participants. Those attending were affiliated with organizations representing the interests of veterans and certifying organizations. Four topics were discussed, as described below.

**A. Simple Concept/Complex Reality**

This topic was initiated by a question from one of those attending, “How did something that started out as such a simple idea (improved recognition by the civilian sector of military training, education, and experience) turn out to be so complicated when it came to putting it into practice?” The representative of a certifying organization who attended this session described several sources or “layers” of complexity. First, in many occupational areas, there are multiple certifying organizations that compete with each other for “market share.” Second, in many occupational areas there are multiple membership organizations that also compete with each other for members and each of these membership organizations may have an affiliated certifying organization that they have historically sponsored, supported, and promoted. These membership organizations then sometimes exercise their influence with employers regarding which certification to require or to honor. This can lead to blatant favoritism toward an organization's certification.

A case was cited in which a certifying organization in a health occupation had one surgical certification and two non-surgical certifications. A competing certifying organization had a single surgical certification. In many hospitals, a practitioner certified by the first organization in any one of its three areas is allowed to perform surgery, even if the certification is not in the surgical area. Conversely, a practitioner who has the surgical certification from the other organization is not allowed hospital privileges at all.

A participant asked if fear of potential legal liability was the driver behind all these machinations. The reply was that fear of legal liability can be a “scare tactic” that is used by the certifying organizations to incentivize employers to recognize or require certifications. However, the competition among the certifying organizations was ascribed primarily to the desire to establish and maintain control over certification for a given occupational area as a “niche market” for the certifying organization, and in some cases, its related membership organization.



## **B. Communicating to Veterans**

The group discussed the challenges inherent in informing veterans about a topic as complex as this. Two types of information and dissemination strategies were discussed: person-to-person and web sites.

In the person-to-person category, six organizational channels of communication were identified:

- Veterans Service Organizations (e.g. the American Legion)
- The Department of Labor/Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
- The Department of Veterans Affairs/Education Service (VA)
- State Veterans' Representatives (Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Staff – LVERs and DVOPs – both funded by VETS)
- State Veterans' Affairs Agencies
- Military separation centers.

It was the consensus of the group that, in all these areas, those at higher levels need to use their position to “leverage” their information dissemination by emphasizing interaction with those contact persons who, in turn, are in a position to inform others. It also was the consensus of the group that the organizational channel most in need of immediate improvement is the military separation centers.

The second information dissemination strategy discussed was web sites. In a brief discussion, the group concluded that this strategy deserved strong and immediate emphasis.

## **C. Limitations of the New Benefit**

A group member pointed out that the new VA benefit has certain limitations with respect to certification that are not immediately evident. First, whatever the amount of the certification test, the veteran is required to “front” the cost and seek reimbursement from VA. Second, if the test requires the use of expensive tools or equipment, the veteran must provide them without any opportunity for reimbursement. An obvious example that was cited is the need for a tractor-trailer rig to take a commercial driver's license test. Third, if a veteran makes use of preparation courses for a specific certification test, the course fees are not reimbursable under the VA education benefits, unless those courses are part of an approved curriculum that the veteran has been following.

In light of these factors, it was concluded that any information available on waivers continues to be very valuable for veterans, along with information on the VA test fee reimbursement benefit. In some instances, organizations are willing to waive test fees for veterans. In other instances, portions of the tests themselves may be waived as well. A member of the group pointed out that most states are willing to waive the driving test for the commercial driver's license for veterans, as long as they take and pass the written test. The principal benefit of this waiver is that the

## **Breakout Session #4**

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veteran is spared the considerable expense of renting a tractor-trailer rig in order to take and pass the commercial driver's license test.

### **D. Accountability for Results**

A group member stressed the importance of tracking progress with regard to licensure and certification for veterans. It was proposed that, before next year's conference, focus groups be conducted with:

- Veterans
- Staff of State Approving Agencies
- Staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Staff of certifying organizations, and
- Staff of testing organizations

It was the consensus of the group that this would help ensure that activities underway were on the right track and that real progress was being made "outside the beltway."

## **II. TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING SECOND BREAKOUT SESSION**

The second Breakout Session in this category was considerably larger and had somewhat greater diversity in the affiliations of the participants. The group included representatives of a number of certifying organizations, as well as representatives of human resources organizations and the military services. Eight topics were discussed, as described below.

### **A. Exchanging Information on Training, Education, and Work Experience**

This group gave considerable attention to the key linkage between the military and civilian sectors with regard to the occupational information that needs to be exchanged between these two sectors. This occupational information includes information on training, education, and work experience in the two sectors. A major obstacle in this area is the lack of common terminology or nomenclature. The existence of differing technical terminology, acronyms, and jargon in the military and civilian sectors has created a situation in which it is necessary to "translate" the meaning of information from one sector to the corresponding meaning in the other sector.

Only if this translation step is successful, can individuals from either sector have confidence that they are communicating accurately about the extent to which occupational elements from one sector correspond to or differ from related occupational elements from the other sector. It was pointed out that this translation is necessary to assure communications in both directions. Certifying organizations in the civilian sector need to have information on military training, education, and work experience that they can comprehend in order to determine accurately and equitably the degree to which military occupational experiences meet or fall short of meeting

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civilian occupational requirements. Conversely, military servicemembers and veterans need to have similarly comprehensible information on civilian training, education, and work experience so they can fully understand the civilian standards and requirements against which their military occupational experiences will be assessed.

Against this backdrop, the group identified three key issues:

- What level of detail in occupational information is necessary for the respective parties to be assured that their communication needs have been fully met?
- How is the validity of information assured? That is, what infrastructure exists to assure that the information exchanged on the various occupational elements actually represents what it appears to represent?
- How can it be assured that occupational information with broad career implications (e.g. generic “work readiness” skills) is conveyed from the military sector to the civilian sector, along with the occupational information that has occupation-specific implications?

With respect to the third issue, it was pointed out that many aspects of military training, education, and experience provide generic skills that are fundamental to a wide variety of career choices. Accordingly, for a servicemember seeking to make a direct transfer from a military occupational specialty (MOS) to that MOS's counterpart civilian occupation and its certification or licensure requirements, a “gap analysis” is indeed a helpful tool. However, for many other servicemembers whose MOS has no direct civilian counterpart, or who choose to make a change in their career orientation upon leaving the military, the occupation-specific “gap analysis” is not a useful tool. However, this second category of servicemembers would benefit from documentation of the more generic aspects of military training, education and experience that provide a “patch” over at least part of the gap that is inevitable between their military and civilian career choices.

### **B. Addressing Real Problems**

The group articulated an interest in assuring that the problems identified and the strategies developed relate directly to barriers actually experienced by veterans. The corresponding concern was to guard against the possibility that the activities undertaken might come to reflect the priorities of the various organizational interest groups, rather than the needs of veterans. This concern mirrors the concern expressed in the first Breakout Session that was accompanied by the recommendation to conduct focus groups in order to have some objective measurement of the status of activities in this area and the contribution of those activities to meaningful progress for servicemembers and veterans as they plan for and manage their respective transitions from working in the military sector to working in the civilian sector.

### **C. High Level Support from the Department of Defense**

Group members expressed a desire for high level support for this initiative by the Department of Defense (DOD). One group member asked if it was possible to obtain a policy decision in support of the initiative. Another member noted that DOD recently had announced the designation of an individual as the Chancellor of Education for DOD. Group members were interested in learning who had been assigned that responsibility and whether that development is relevant to certification and licensure for transitioning military.

### **D. Networking at Individual and Group Levels**

Group members expressed interest in the various ways that the results of this year's conference could support and enhance opportunities for networking during the coming year. Three levels of information and interaction were identified:

- Conference participants will appreciate receiving information that will assist them in making follow-up contacts with other participants.
- Conference participants also will appreciate receiving information that reflects somewhat greater detail in the information available on those individuals who could be considered “key informants” in various areas, including information on their particular areas of expertise.
- Some conference participants may find it useful, during the coming year, to hold meetings of designated subgroups of the conference participants, with the participants in the meeting selected to include those individuals who represent a “community of interest” in a given area of activity.

### **E. Linkages between Certification and Licensure**

One group member raised a potentially sensitive issue. That issue relates to the common practice among state licensing agencies of requiring a specific national certification as a prerequisite for obtaining a license in a given occupational area. The question raised with respect to that practice was whether the state agencies following that approach could prove to be vulnerable to legal action on the grounds that the practice represents a restraint of free trade, since the actions of public agencies may be promoting virtual “monopolies” by certain certifying organizations in certain occupational areas.

### **F. Interests and Concerns of Human Resources Professionals**

The second Breakout Session included human resources (HR) representatives from the Federal Government and the private sector, specifically health professions. The representatives from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) expressed an interest in assuring that federal civilian employment continues to receive full consideration as a civilian employment option for veterans. It was noted that federal employment received extensive attention from the Interagency Task

Force on Licensing and Certification, and that active participation by OPM has always been considered a very welcome and positive development in this area of activity.

The HR representatives from the federal sector and the health professions expressed somewhat different emphases with respect to the value of certification. The federal HR perspective currently focuses on confirming that a given civilian certification actually adds value to worker preparation in the relevant occupational area. The HR perspective in the health professions is less dubious regarding the value of certification, but more concerned about over-specialization and a corresponding lack of emphasis upon underlying and essential generalist skills.

### **G. An Invitation To The Formation Of An Overarching Coalition of Organizations Involved in Licensure, Certification, and Accreditation**

A member of the group pointed out that the Federal Government has, for some time, been involved in coordinating the activities of its many and disparate agencies that play a role that relates to licensure and certification through meetings of the Federal Interagency Task Force on Licensing and Certification. Now that the Federal Government has begun to mobilize itself in a coherent manner for this purpose, it was suggested that key organizations in the credentialing community consider convening an analogous "Umbrella Coalition" of organizations representing the key constituencies involved in licensure and certification. To illustrate this possibility, the following organizations were identified as potential candidates for membership in a coalition of key stakeholders:

- The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB)
- The Coalition for Professional Certification (CPC)
- The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)
- The Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR)
- The National Council on Occupational Education (NCOE)
- The American Council on Education (ACE) - Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (CALEC)
- The Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
- The Association of Specialty and Professional Accreditation (ASPA)

These illustrative candidates are not intended to be exhaustive, prescriptive, or definitive. Rather, they are identified to illustrate a larger and more important principle. Just as the Federal Government has taken steps to assert a measure of discipline over its own tendencies toward a "Tower of Babel," a comparable effort on the part of the key private organizations involved in occupational credentialing would strengthen the prospects for a successful public-private partnership by establishing an entity in the credentialing community to serve as a broadly representative counterpart to the Federal Interagency Task Force.

## **H. Summary of Challenges**

It was the consensus of the group that issues, strategies, and next steps have a natural tendency to converge around three major challenges that face this public-private partnership:

- It will be absolutely critical to the success of this initiative that methods be developed to exchange occupational information on training, education and work experience, between the military and civilian sectors, in a manner that provides both sectors with sufficient detail, with adequate assurances of validity, and with terminology that is mutually understandable and equally meaningful to both sectors.
- It is fundamental to any objective criterion of success that information be disseminated to servicemembers and veterans in a way that encompasses the daunting diversity of their occupational experiences and career goals, that provides them with sufficient (but not too much) detail, and that reaches them at those critical points in career planning where they have sufficient time and maneuvering room to make the necessary advance preparations.
- In order to achieve the necessary communication, clarification, and coordination of occupational information between the military and civilian sectors, it will be necessary to establish effective and efficient communication networks among the professionals representing the numerous constituencies involved, both with respect to their one-on-one interfaces, and also with respect to group interfaces within their respective areas of specialized interest.

**Breakout Session #5**  
**“Bridging the Gap to One’s Future Prior to Separation”**

**Session Leader:** Sandra Winborne, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

**Session Format:** This was primarily an informational session during which Ms. Winborne could educate participants on DANTES’ role and the process DANTES’ uses to develop agreements with certification boards.

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support is part of the Department of Defense (DoD). DANTES is responsible for establishing agreements with national certification boards, which will authorize DANTES as a testing administrator for the certification board. The agreements are made through memoranda of understanding (MOU) between the board and DANTES. The MOU authorizes DANTES to administer the certification exams through the DoD education centers. DANTES administers written exams only and does not administer practical exams.

Ms. Winborne’s breakout session provided participants with information on:

- Certification and DANTES’ Programs;
- Process for Developing Memoranda of Understanding Between DANTES’ and Certification Board;
- How to Contact DANTES.

**Background on Certification and DANTES’ Programs**

Ms. Winborne frequently does presentations to servicemembers explaining the benefits of certification and how DANTES’ can assist them with the certification process. She began her breakout session by providing participants with an overview of the type of information she provides to servicemembers.

Ms. Winborne typically begins her presentations to servicemembers by getting them acquainted with the top professions identified by Money Magazine and the fastest growing occupations identified by the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. She then explains what certification is:

- National recognition of an individual’s qualifications to perform specific technical tasks; and
- Professional achievement in a particular field.

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She also explains why it is important:

- Enhances job opportunities for transitioning military personnel;
- Validates military training in meeting national occupational standards;
- Documents experience and credentials; and
- Certifies an individual's competence.

DANTES' role in certification is to:

- Ensure the validity of certification agency;
- Market the certification program;
- Manage funded pilots, which pay for certification costs;
- Prepare statements of work for contracts;
- Publish Part III – DEPH; and
- Publish the National Calendar of Certification Programs.

Since many servicemembers are unfamiliar with certification, Ms. Winborne explains some of the benefits of certification, including:

- Receipt of professional publications, journals, newsletters;
- Networking with other professionals in field;
- Recognition by civilian employers of the credential (they're more likely to be familiar with the certification than with an Military Occupational Specialty code or title);
- Professional achievement in a defined occupation; and
- Job advancement.

To help servicemembers understand why it would be to their advantage to become certified during their military service, she explains some of the in-service benefits of certification, including:

- Requires extensive personal commitment;
- Promotes growth and professionalism in job;
- Promotes professional ethics;
- Validates for military that jobs are done independently and completely.

A lot has been happening in the area of certification in recent years and Ms. Winborne explained some of the recent events:

- DANTES has added some new certification programs, including:
  - Federal Aviation Administration,
  - American Society of Military Comptrollers,
  - Board of Certification of Emergency Nurses,
  - National Strength and Conditioning Association,
  - National Commission for Certified Crane Operators,



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- American Society of Industrial Security, and
- American Institute of Constructors;
  
- Members of the Army National Guard, Army Reserves, and Air Force Reserves are now provided with after-the-fact reimbursement for certification exam costs;
  
- New legislation allows payment for certification fees through the Montgomery GI Bill;
  
- An Interagency Task Force on Certification and Licensure of Servicemembers and Veterans was created to address credentialing barriers.

### **Process for Developing Memoranda of Understanding Between DANTES' and Certification Board**

For certification agencies interested in partnering with DANTES, Ms. Winborne explained the steps that should be followed:

- Step 1 – Send Ms. Winborne a letter stating interest in becoming a partner;
- Step 2 – DANTES will send the agency:
  - Sample Memorandum of Understanding,
  - Part III of the DANTES Education Program Handbook – Certification Programs, which provides information on the various certifications offered through DANTES. This will allow the agency to see what kind of information needs to be provided on the certification program (e.g., criteria of eligibility, fees pages, and testing dates).

### **Contact Information**

Ms. Winborne provided the following contact information:

DANTES' Certification Program  
Web Address: [www.voled.doded.mil](http://www.voled.doded.mil)  
Manager: Sandra L. Winborne  
DSN 922-1360 CML 850-452-1360  
[winborne@voled.doded.mil](mailto:winborne@voled.doded.mil) OR  
[cbarham@voled.doded.mil](mailto:cbarham@voled.doded.mil)