

Retired Military Leaders Support NCCC Service

Each year on the last Monday in May, our nation honors the men and women who have given their lives in the service of our country. As retired Generals from the U.S. military, we fully understand their sacrifice and solemn charge, and do not ask the public's attention lightly.

Over the years we have been closely associated with another group of service men and women who today face the possibility their unit will be eliminated – just as their continued presence is needed most by our nation.

That group is the National Civilian Community Corps, a team-based, military-style program for young men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. Established in 1993 as part of a Department of Defense authorization bill and now part of the AmeriCorps family of national service programs, NCCC is slated to be eliminated as part of the proposed Fiscal Year 2007 federal budget, which the Congress is currently considering. What's more, serious attempts have been made to eliminate supplemental funding for its ongoing – and significant – Gulf Coast relief efforts.

In our view, to shut down or curtail NCCC would be a mistake, not only because NCCC teams have proudly served in every state of this nation with dignity and honor, but because the ties of AmeriCorps*NCCC to the military traditions of our nation run deep and strong.

NCCC is not a touchy-feely group for dilettantes. Retired military personnel helped design and run the program, which uses regional residential campuses as bases from which to train national service teams and leaders. As part of the Disaster Response Network, AmeriCorps*NCCC teams are trained and certified in first aid, CPR, damage assessment, family assistance, and (in some cases) firefighting, and can deploy rapidly to emergency situations in rural or urban settings.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the program is being put to the test, and it is responding effectively and commendably. To date, the National Civilian Community Corps has assisted 1,140,000 people in the Gulf region; cleaned out 1,500 homes; contributed nearly 2,000 tons of food and 2,790 tons of clothing; served 1 million meals; refurbished 732 homes; supported 654 emergency response centers; and completed 1,730 damage assessments.

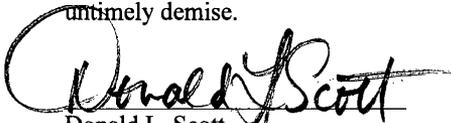
Their efforts in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Alabama are not uncharacteristic. NCCC teams have responded to virtually every national disaster since 1994 – floods, hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, and the 9/11 attacks. In partnership with nonprofit and faith-based groups and with local, state, and federal agencies, NCCC teams over the past decade have completed nearly 6,500 projects in thousands of communities in every state. They have enabled nearly 125,000 episodic volunteers to make meaningful contributions in their local communities. And, through their service to others,

NCCC members are also gaining knowledge, maturity, and stamina for future disaster relief, and for community leadership.

Though NCCC members are not “citizen soldiers” in the traditional military sense of the word “soldier,” some of our nation’s best-known citizen soldiers – former Secretary of State Colin Powell and Senator John McCain, for example – recognize their contributions and great value to our nation. As Secretary Powell has said, “Young people that serve in AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps show us the best of America’s spirit.”

People like General Powell and Senator McCain also recognize the value of NCCC to our nation’s veterans and military families. From 1999 to 2004, NCCC worked with several dozen organizations – including the San Diego County Veterans Service, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Vermont Office of Veteran Affairs, the City of Bridgeport, Vietnam Veterans of San Diego – on 38 separate service projects that directly assisted more than 8,000 veterans. For the past decade, NCCC teams in Perry Point, Maryland, have engaged in service projects at the VA Medical Center, assisting residents and helping patients prepare for their re-entry into society. And, NCCC members have lent strong support to the Veterans’ History Project, taking time beyond their required NCCC service commitment to preserve the sacrifice and memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

On Memorial Day 2006, when we pay tribute to those who served our nation with distinction, we believe it is appropriate for our leaders to expand support for the NCCC, rather than oversee its untimely demise.



Donald L. Scott
Army Brigadier General (Ret.)
NCCC Founding Director, 1993 - 1996
Currently Deputy Librarian of Congress



Andrew P. Chambers
Lieutenant General (Ret.)
NCCC Director, 1998 - 2000
Commanded the VII Corps in U.S. Army Europe, “the largest corps in the free world at the time.”



Fred Peters
Colonel (Ret.)
NCCC Acting Director, 1996 - 1998 and 1998 - 2002