

Pilot Program — 4th Judicial District Military and Veterans Court

Scope

This is a **draft** outline for a court that is **initially** intended to deal **only** with military personnel and veterans who are interacting with civilian courts and law enforcement for whatever reason in El Paso (Colorado Springs) and Teller counties.

It is expected the pilot program will deal primarily with misdemeanor cases that result in an arrest, although some felony cases will also need to be heard.

Note that it is not anticipated that all groups listed here can be brought online within the initial pilot program. For example, initial work with local military bases will probably concentrate on Fort Carson. Treatment providers are likely to be brought on board as the need arises.

It should be *emphasized* that the purpose of this pilot program is to find out what works and what doesn't work. We also anticipate that during the pilot program additional requirements will be encountered that are not anticipated here.

Involved Entities

Police and sheriff — exclusive of jail

- Suggest front-line officers operate in the same manner they always have for most part.
- Objective should be to not add to burden of front-line officers or influence their judgement when responding to service calls.
- Possibly provide front-line officers with handouts as to where military personnel and veterans can seek help if an arrest isn't appropriate. This is not an immediate objective.

El Paso County Justice Center (CJC) — operated by Sheriff Terry Maketa

- Immediate need is for a coordinator to help set up program and define what will and won't work for jail personnel and act as go between with district attorney's office.
- At booking jail deputies ask if prisoner is active-duty military or veteran. That information needs to be included on computer and displayed with the public inmate search.
- Need means for CJC to verify veteran status of prisoners, which does not presently exist.
- Liaison with military bases and means of notification — At present CJC apparently notifies Provost Marshall at applicable base that one of their people is in custody after booking.
- Pilot program will not include prisoners brought to jail for municipal violations although their booking information should include military status for consistency.

4th Judicial District Attorney — John Newsome

- Immediate need is for a coordinator to act as go between with sheriff, court, military, Veterans Administration, and treatment providers.
- Need means for prosecutors to identify military personnel and veterans prior to hearings.
- Need means to pass along booking information from CJC as to active-duty or veteran status.
- Victim's advocate to establish contact with victims and find out their desires for the case and ensure the judge hears what the victim would like to see happen. Also obtain information about defendant's known conditions, e.g., PTSD, TBI, substance abuse, combat history, children, etc., that affect the case. Can Amy Barton do this as she is Fast Track victim advocate now?
- District Attorney-elect Dan May has been contacted about this pilot program and has agreed to support it.

4th Judicial District and County Courts

- District Judge Ronald Crowder has agreed to coordinate efforts with district attorney, military, and treatment providers. Felony cases would be heard in his court.
- Cases are expected to be mostly misdemeanors at least initially. Need county judge with military background, preferably combat veteran to hear these cases. Judge Jonathan Walker is suggested. He is a Vietnam combat veteran and also served as public defender before stepping up to the bench. Judge Walker also presently represents judges on the Colorado Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB) and coordination with that body will be essential.
- Coordination with provost marshals at bases in order for courts to bond active-duty military to their custody when transfer is appropriate in the case.
- Probation officer to follow up on convictions and see defendant's sentence is carried out and coordinate with military bases or veterans administration — Can Misty Young do this as part of her oversight of offenders given unsupervised probation?
- Education for judges by VA doctors and psychiatrists on PTSD, TBI, and other disabled veteran problems.

Military liaison for active-duty personnel

- Immediate need for coordinator from at least one base, probably Fort Carson, to act as go between with sheriff and CJC, district attorney, judge and court staff, and base treatment facilities — this falls under the garrison commander, presently Col. Smith.
- Fort Carson Provost Marshall apparently already working with CJC — Coordinator to tie that in with pilot program.
- Arrange for base JAG to take jurisdiction in cases where active-duty military personnel are medically disabled.
- Coordination with base hospitals, treatment facilities, and individuals — Initially set this up with Fort Carson and expand from there. Contact — Col. Heidi Terrio?
- Family assistance groups — General negative impression of these groups on local bases. Need intelligent contacts, not ideologues.

Veterans Administration liaison

- El Paso County Office of Veteran and Military Affairs — need coordinator. Likely Jim Tackett.
- Colorado Springs Vet Center — Provides local treatment for veterans with PTSD. Need coordinator — Dr. Lisa Brenner?
- VA Hospital — Have met with Rich De Blasio at Denver VA hospital and he is initial contact there.
- Veteran's homeless shelters — Crawford House. Contact is Dr. Steve Kidd
- Veterans Administration vocational rehabilitation programs.
- Disabled American Veterans.

Treatment providers

It is of little or no benefit to have a special court if defendants cannot be placed in appropriate treatment or given sentences that provide justice without ruining their children, families, marriages, and careers for problems basically caused by their military service.

However, logistics will prevent bringing all needed treatment providers on board initially. It is suggested that for the pilot program a limited number of providers be contacted and others brought on board as required and experience dictates.

We see an initial need for treatment providers in the following specialties:

- Marriage and couples counselors
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic brain injuries (TBI)
- Substance abuse — Alcoholics Anonymous, other groups.
- Prescribed drug reactions, e.g., Lariam, anti-psychotics, pain medications.
- Child care and child custody
- Education and job training
- Employment

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1. Alvarez is also with NOD/Army Wounded Warrior Program.