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FRAN PEREZ-WILHITE APPOINTED TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

VA's Research Advisory Committee to focus on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

(1/27/15) CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A national committee under the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) focused on strategically tackling Gulf War veterans' illnesses will receive the sharp expertise of a North Carolina military veteran, business and community leader.

Fran Perez-Wilhite, MBA, was appointed recently to the VA's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, announced VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. RAC explores a variety of topics affecting Gulf War veterans, including new research into the possible association between exposure to chemical nerve agents and brain cancer.

"I am grateful for this opportunity presented by the Department of Veteran Affairs," said Charlotte resident Perez-Wilhite. "Through diligent research and collaboration, I look forward to making an impact in the crucial study of illnesses affecting these remarkable veterans."

Since 2006, Perez-Wilhite serves in Business Development with the North Carolina Military Business Center (NCMBC). She is a former U.S. Army Officer who served as a Lieutenant in Desert Shield in 1990. Perez-Wilhite is an active veteran, following her dedicated years of service, as well as a proven leader throughout the Charlotte community. Her current and previous service includes the North Carolina Advisory Commission on Military Affairs, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Foundation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee and Leadership North Carolina. She's also the recipient of multiple awards, most recently the ATHENA International Leadership Award and a business award from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Political Caucus.

Said NCMBC Executive Director Scott Dorney, "The veteran population will be excellently represented by Fran as she serves on the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses."

He added, "Fran demonstrates daily the leadership and tenacity necessary to improve veteran healthcare. Furthermore, her experience as a former U.S. Army officer in Desert Shield and with the NCMBC, working closely with veteran-owned businesses, will help her bring a unique perspective to the advisory committee."

Perez-Wilhite will complete terms on the RAC through September 2017. For additional details on the RAC, visit www.va.gov/RAC-GWVI.

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About Fran Perez-Wilhite

Fran Perez-Wilhite is a proven military veteran, business and community leader and is currently Charlotte's Business Development liaison with the North Carolina Military Business Center. She has also been appointed by Thom Tillis, U.S. Senator and then Speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives, to serve on the N.C. Advisory Commission on Military Affairs. In 2015, she was appointed by U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald to serve on the VA's Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. Perez-Wilhite is a U.S. Army veteran with service as a Lieutenant in Desert Shield. She's a 2012 ATHENA International Leadership Award recipient in addition to numerous business leadership accolades.

