

Meet the Commissioner



Brigadier General (ret.) Steven P. Bullard **Compact Commissioner** **MIC3 Kentucky**

Chair Bullard has served as the MIC3 Kentucky Commissioner since 2019 and has chaired the Compliance Committee since 2021. Chair Bullard also serves as the Executive Director for the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs.

What is one thing you wish that schools and uniform-connected families better understood about the Compact?

My goal would be better advertising of the Compact's existence to military families as an informational and problem-solving resource for K-12 education related challenges related to uniformed services-related relocation. No one needs to be an expert on MIC3 guidance; however, they do need to know the Compact exists as a resource to access its advantages. That requires a determined effort to ensure that both families of uniformed services personnel and school administrators are aware of its existence. States, through their commissioners, can assist with this by partnering with their Department of Education to ensure its existence is acknowledged by school administrators. The Compact, however, relies on the federal government to ensure members of our uniformed services are properly informed.

What is one Compact-related initiative, partnership, or collaboration in your state that you are particularly proud of?

The establishment of a local school leaders council by both of our major military installations, Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. This invaluable partnership provides the opportunity to connect with the K-12 school leaders of our communities most affected by uniformed service transition at least two times a year. We applaud the garrisons at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox for their programs.

What quote or motto best represents your approach to service?

Service before self. This is one of the elements of the Air Force motto, "Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do." Back in the Fall of 2006 I was walking down the street in Kabul, Afghanistan when a fully armed and loaded U.S. Marine walked up to me and said, "Sir, do you know how lucky you are?" What do you mean, I asked, in surprise? "Your Air Force motto," he said. He then added that he had studied all the service mottos, and finds that

the Air Force motto is the most outstanding of all. Just think, he told me - if you just strove to do these three things every day, how positive your life would be! You need to believe in it, he said. I have never forgotten that encounter, and have always since placed greater emphasis on that Air Force motto. It works!

Have you or a member of your family served in the military? If yes, please share who, what branch of service, and the length of service.

My family has a proud military legacy, dating back, as far as we can trace, to the English Army in the late 1200s, where my Bullard family served as archers. My ancestral grandfather Robert brought his son, Benjamin, to New England in the year 1630, where they became original residents of Boston and served in our nation's first militia forces. My ancestors fought in numerous Colonial Wars against the French and native Americans, and at the battles of Bunker Hill, Lexington and Concord. Both my grandfathers fought with the Army in World War II, one in Europe, the other in the Philippines. My great uncle Albert, a tall, distinguished man, was shuttling a skiff taking sailors to shore leave from the middle of Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked. He spent the day rescuing sailors from the water, and was promoted directly to Chief Petty Officer at the end of the day, spending 30 years in the Navy at the same E-7 rate. My father followed Uncle Al into the Navy, completing 21 years and serving on the carriers Forrestal and Midway. I was fortunate enough to serve 33 and one-half years in the Air Force and Air National Guard, with fascinating assignments and promotion to Brigadier General. My eldest son is a clarinetist in the "President's Own" Marine Corps Band at the White House, and another son served six years as an intelligence specialist in the Air National Guard.

What advice would you offer to commissioners seeking to strengthen Compact implementation in their state?

Develop as many relationships as you can throughout both the K-12 school leadership community and the military community. Make sure you (and the Compact) are widely known and available as a resource. Offer to be a speaker/trainer at community events and with school associations, for example the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents here. Ensure you know who your senior Department of Education leaders are, and they know you.

In what ways has your perspective shifted over the course of your service to the Commission since your appointment?

I was barely aware of the compact during my military service, as I was single throughout my active duty Air Force years and my family stayed in one location throughout my Air National Guard years. I knew about the military emphasis through School Liaison Officers and community outreach; however, I was unaware of the education community commitment to the Compact's success. This is an education-driven initiative, as the Compact is not a federal government or uniformed services initiative. I have come to value the commitment of the education community as a whole, and state legislators through the Council of State Governments and our numerous ex-officio partners, to serve our uniformed services families and effectively address the challenges inherent in frequent transfers to serve our nation.