

[H.A.S.C. No. 115-101]

HEARING

ON

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

AND

OVERSIGHT OF PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED
PROGRAMS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL HEARING

ON

**MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE:
FISCAL YEAR 2019**

HEARING HELD
APRIL 13, 2018



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

30-682

WASHINGTON : 2019

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† This hearing was originally scheduled to be held on March 21, 2018, but was postponed. Witness prepared statements are all dated March 21, 2018.

MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE: FISCAL YEAR 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL,
Washington, DC, Friday, April 13, 2018.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:02 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Coffman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE COFFMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM COLORADO, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

Mr. COFFMAN. This hearing is called to order.

I want to welcome everyone to the Military Personnel Subcommittee's hearing on the current and future state of the military personnel enterprise as we continue to build the fiscal year 2019 NDAA, National Defense Authorization Act.

Our panel of the service personnel chiefs is here to address each of the services' personnel requirements, including personnel policies for recruiting and retention, family programs, and to address other budget and legislative requests for fiscal year 2019.

Today's focus is on the request for manpower increases from the armed services and the requirements that went into building the specific increases, as well as how the personnel policies currently in place will support and sustain these increases.

With the difficult recruiting and retention environment, driven by a lessened overall propensity to serve, reduced pool of qualified candidates, and a robust economy, the competition for recruits will be difficult and you all will be competing for the same pool.

As you reference in your written testimony, General Seamands, today, only one in four 17- to 24-year-olds in the United States is eligible to serve in the Army, and only one in eight has the propensity to enlist in the military, making Army accessions a challenging and resource-intensive activity.

The subcommittee also remains concerned about the ability of all the services to maintain their high quality standards and still meet their recruiting goals.

Also, I am especially interested in your plans for retention of the right service members that are central to your mission and, specifically, what additional steps the Air Force is taking to fully address their pilot crisis.

Before I introduce our panel, let me offer Congresswoman Speier an opportunity to make any opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JACKIE SPEIER, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Actually, my comments mirror yours.

The National Defense Strategy led Congress to assume there will be growth in end strength for most of the services. The fiscal year 2019 request does seek increases not just for next year but also requests an end state for fiscal year 2023 of more than 10,000 from the current authorization levels for the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

For the past 2 years, Congress has written a blank check for the Army, providing end-strength increases not requested as part of the budget. We cannot continue this behavior. Whether we agree that the services need an increase or not, it is important for Congress to understand what the long-term plans are so we can have informed debate and make educated decisions about our military.

I would like to understand how the services would sustain this growth pattern over the next 5 years in an era where finding quality applicants is becoming more and more difficult. Congress also must understand how increased end strength will apply to the force, fill current gaps, and increase units and capabilities.

I yield back.

Mr. COFFMAN. We will give each witness the opportunity to present his or her testimony and each member an opportunity to question the witnesses for 5 minutes.

We would also respectfully remind the witnesses to summarize, to the greatest extent possible, the high points of your written testimony in 5 minutes or less. Your written comments and statements will be made part of the hearing record.

Let me welcome our panel: Lieutenant General Thomas Seamands, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 [Personnel], United States Army; Vice Admiral Robert P. Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel; Lieutenant General Gina M. Grosso, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services, United States Air Force; Lieutenant General Michael A. Rocco, Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, United States Marine Corps.

General Seamands, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF LTG THOMAS C. SEAMANDS, USA, DEPUTY
CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1, UNITED STATES ARMY**

General SEAMANDS. Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity today to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

I have submitted a statement for the record. I now would like to highlight a few of the points.

Manning our Army is one of the key components to readiness and vital to the Army's ability to fight and win our Nation's wars. Thank you for the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, which authorized the Army to grow by 8,500. We also appreciate the 2-year budget deal, which will improve readiness and ensure our formations are filled in the years to come.

To build the future Army, we must recruit diverse men and women of high quality and high character in a competitive market,

as the chairman talked about, where only one in four 17- to 24-year-olds is eligible to join the Army and one in eight has a propensity to enlist in the military.

While the Army projects recruiting challenges in all components, maintaining the quality will continue to be our priority and the Army will not sacrifice quality for quantity. Our recruiters across the country are doing incredible work to achieve this mission.

The Army must also continue to retain the most talented soldiers and noncommissioned officers [NCOs] with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs. We project historic retention rates again this year for our NCOs.

The Army leadership embraces talent management as a cornerstone for how we will retain our best officers and NCOs. The Integrated Pay and Personnel System-Army, IPPS-A, will be the keystone in the archway of our talent management. IPPS-A will be a responsive system connecting all three components and build a marketplace for talent.

We are a standards-based team in the Army, and the Army remains committed to giving all soldiers who can meet the standards of a military occupational specialty the opportunity to serve in that specialty. Last year, the Army implemented gender-neutral physical standards for initial-entry training for specific jobs. The initial results are positive. We have successfully accessed and transferred almost 700 women into previously closed occupations of infantry, armor, and artillery. The opportunities are so popular, we plan on expanding the program this year.

As part of the total force, our Army civilians are vital and comprise about 22 percent of our total personnel. We need a civilian workforce with unique, critical skills to support our soldiers and support our families.

As we build our force, we focus on the areas that provide the foundation for our future. We remain focused on personal resiliency, suicide prevention, with world-class programs for soldiers, civilians, and families. And we are aggressively working to decrease the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health help.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation are not compatible with Army values, and they diminish our readiness. Therefore, combating all forms of sexual misconduct remains a top priority for the Army. Although we are optimistic about the progress we have made in reducing sexual violence in the ranks, we understand there is a lot more work to do as we drive toward zero.

You have authorized us to grow, and we are thankful for that. We must ensure we are ready. The Army has improved personnel readiness by increasing the number of deployable soldiers, and we have an ongoing review to increase the number of deployable soldiers even more in order to enhance readiness.

As you are aware, the Department of Defense has issued a new retention policy for nondeployable service members in February. The Army is working with OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] on the implementation of these changes. The Army will make continued reductions in our nondeployable population a priority.

Because we care for our soldiers as they prepare for life after the service, the Army's Soldier for Life program, with support from commanders and command sergeant majors, has resulted in in-

creased educational and employment opportunities for our soldiers, our veterans, and our family members at a significant reduction of unemployment cost.

Additionally, I look forward to beginning the discussion of review of DOPMA [Defense Officer Personnel Management Act] to determine what is essential and what needs to be updated.

Our Army is strong because of the courage and commitment of our soldiers, civilians, veterans, and family members who serve our Nation. I thank all of you for your continued support to the All-Volunteer Army.

[The prepared statement of General Seamands can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

Mr. COFFMAN. Vice Admiral Burke, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF VADM ROBERT P. BURKE, USN, CHIEF OF
NAVAL PERSONNEL, UNITED STATES NAVY**

Admiral BURKE. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the men and women in the United States Navy. Your stalwart support for them and their families continues to have a profound impact upon the health of our force today.

Global demands upon the Navy continue to grow. We must continue to recruit, develop, and retain the highly skilled workforce needed to meet the growing demand signal for naval forces. Our force structure will grow as we build the Navy the Nation needs, which will require increasing end strength.

As we grow, our need for highly talented people increases. At the same time, propensity to serve is declining, and each of the services, as well as the civilian sector, are vying for the same limited talent pool. We are clearly in a war for talent. Current forecasts, based on leading economic indicators, suggest difficult times ahead. Labor market factors may pull sailors with critical skills into the growing civilian job market.

We took note of these indicators and initiated preemptive action to retain these sailors, using all available policy levers to posture ourselves to meet this anticipated growth. Despite this, we just made our fiscal year 2017 end-strength targets. This year's trajectory is good, but we will require steady and reliable funding going forward to stay on track. The new 2-year budget deal is great news for us and is an excellent step in that direction.

While recruiters had challenges last year, an increasing fiscal year 2018 recruiting mission will be even more difficult for them. Certain fields are in short supply. And our projected growth profile requires a balanced approach of accession increases as well as retention improvement. And while our overall, aggregate retention remains high, the nuclear field, special warfare, advanced electronics, aviation, and cyber areas demand close attention.

Targeted bonuses continue to be the most cost-effective monetary tool in addressing those retention challenges, but we are aggressively applying a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives, with good effect.

Toward that end, we continue to implement and expand our Sailor 2025 portfolio, which is a dynamic set of over 45 initiatives that work to provide our sailors and their families the choices, the flexibility, and transparency of processes that they expect and deserve.

And we have combined that with our manpower, personnel, training, and education enterprise transformation efforts. Through those efforts, we will provide these programs to our sailors, with a renewed focus on customer service through streamlined efficient business processes and modern systems.

We will also better meet the needs of our fleet commanders through agility, responsiveness, and the use of predictive analytics so that we can be the pillar of stability in an uncertain world. So we are moving out now with purpose and a committed sense of urgency on all of these initiatives.

We also remain actively engaged in the Department's review of officer management policies and are grateful for the subcommittee's interest to examine DOPMA to ensure it meets the future needs of each of the services.

I look forward to your questions, and thank you.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Burke can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Vice Admiral Burke.

Lieutenant General Grosso, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF LT GEN GINA M. GROSSO, USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL AND SERVICES, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

General GROSSO. Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to deliver the Air Force's personnel posture for fiscal year 2019.

The Air Force's number one priority to accelerate readiness is increasing end strength. We appreciate the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act support for continued end-strength growth. The growth allows the Air Force to compete, deter, and win in a more competitive and dangerous international security environment.

The Air Force's fiscal year 2019 President's budget continues that growth, to 680,400 total force airmen, a 4,700 increase from fiscal year 2018. This growth is part of our deliberate strategy to improve manning in the Air Force and includes increases in pilot production; remotely piloted aircraft, operations, and maintenance; and continues our manpower investment for cyber and intelligence.

Additionally, the growth provides the inventory the Air Force needs to rightsize our training pipeline, improve squadron readiness, and gives us a competitive advantage for airspace and cyberspace superiority.

As you are aware, our most stressed operational career field is aviation. As of October 2017, our total force pilot shortage was approximately 2,000, with the largest shortage, 1,300, in our fighter pilot inventory. The fiscal year 2019 President's budget continues to address the pilot shortage by funding increased pilot production capacity. In addition, this budget funds myriad programs and poli-

cies designed to address assignment, operational tempo, and quality-of-life issues, targeted to improve pilot retention.

The fiscal year 2019 President's budget also increases support to airmen and families through a variety of capabilities that drive mission readiness. The budget increases child and youth funding by \$54 million to a total of \$114 million. This funding expands childcare for those airmen needing care outside of normal duty hours, provides fees to support 4,000 children who only have access to off-base childcare, and funds youth resiliency camps.

The Exceptional Family Member Program assists more than 33,000 airmen who have special-needs families. This budget adds 15 installation-level family support coordinators across the Air Force and also funds increasing respite care for the primary caregiver from 12 to 40 hours per child each month. Taking care of airmen and airmen's children and caregivers removes worries and distractions to allow airmen to fully focus on the mission.

Interpersonal and self-directed violence are detriments to our airmen, our culture, and our core values. These acts negatively impact victims, their units, and unit readiness. We are deeply committed to the prevention of interpersonal and self-directed violence on all fronts by implementing evidence-based programs, to include bystander intervention and life skills training programs and time-based self-directed violence prevention programs.

Should we fall short on our goals to eliminate interpersonal and self-directed violence, we are committed to providing victims, families, and units the care they need across a robust response system.

Today's threat environment requires agile and inclusive military and civilian personnel management systems to ensure the Air Force continues to retain the highly skilled talent needed to defend our Nation.

The enlisted force. We are conducting a triennial review of the Enlisted Evaluation System following a transition to a new system in 2015. Within our officer corps, we are reviewing multiple initiatives, to include modifying our current promotion-competitive categories and establishing technical tracks.

Our civilian workforce is essential to the Air Force's mission and joint warfighting readiness. Recruiting and hiring top civilian talent is critical to our success. In fiscal year 2018, we implemented a Premier College Intern Program. This initiative enables the Air Force to recruit top talent directly from college campuses via a summer intern program, using direct hiring authorities to streamline the process. Our target for fiscal year 2019 onboarding is 500 new civilians, and we currently have 415 acceptances. This approach ensures we leverage the new congressional hiring authorities and stay competitive with aggressive private-sector recruiting.

Finally, the Air Force is modernizing information technology infrastructure across our human resource systems to provide exceptional personnel service to airmen and their families. In a digitally connected world, our airmen deserve the best human resource systems available today. We have a 6-year plan to migrate 115 technology platforms and 400-plus applications to the cloud. As we modernize our information technology platforms, we will provide more modern systems to our airmen and enhance our ability to make data-driven decisions.

In conclusion, we must ensure our airmen have the resources, training, and tools to compete, deter, and win in an increasingly complex security environment. We are committed to prioritizing and resourcing what is most important to make the Air Force more ready and lethal. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you in our endeavors to protect and defend our Nation.

I thank you for your continued support of your Air Force, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Grosso can be found in the Appendix on page 56.]

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Lieutenant General Grosso.
Lieutenant General Rocco.

**STATEMENT OF LTGEN MICHAEL A. ROCCO, USMC, DEPUTY
COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS,
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

General ROCCO. Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss your Marine Corps.

Marines are the foundation of the Corps and its most critical resource. Marines are recruited, trained, educated, and retained to win our Nation's battles. They are smart, resilient, fit, disciplined, and able to overcome adversity. All Marines are warfighters; they are lethal, and they are ready.

Recruiting and retaining high-quality men and women is my number one priority. This year, once again, the Marine Corps will meet its recruiting mission while at the same time exceeding all quality goals. The Department requires 90 percent of Marine recruits to be in the top education tier. We are at 99 percent. It requires 60 percent to be in the highest mental aptitude group. We are over 72 percent.

Just as we recruit the best, so we must retain the best. These Marines must be capable of fulfilling our leadership roles and operational requirements. There is a continuous challenge to keep high-quality Marines, especially in the current economy and increasingly competitive civilian job market. This is particularly true for cyber and many of the high-tech occupations that are critical to the future of warfare.

Incentive pay and bonuses remain vital to our retention effort, and we appreciate your continued support for them. We are open to new ways to recognize, reward, and retain high-quality Marines in the Corps. The Commandant's top priority in this regard is to increase lineal list flexibility for our officer promotions. We believe this is a simple yet effective way to recognize excellence.

We look forward to working with all the services, the Department, and members of the subcommittee on other initiatives that will enhance personnel quality, readiness, and lethality. We remain adaptable and open to new ways to recruit and retain the high-tech force we need for the future as we build on the foundation of the quality Marines we have today.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Rocco can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you.

Let me just begin. I am very concerned—and I would like each of you to address this—with the lowering of standards. I can remember—I was in the Army and the Marine Corps and in the Army at the end of the draft, where, you know, anybody—I guess you had to talk your way out of being in the Army. But I think that the problems—and there were a lot of disciplinary problems, morale problems. But they were actually across the board. It wasn't limited to the United States Army at that time.

And when I look at the military today, when I meet these young men and women who serve in uniform today, they are extraordinary. I mean, we truly have talent. We have an elite force. So we have a smaller force than we have historically had, but it is an elite force. I would rather have fewer numbers and high quality than big numbers and low quality.

And so I know that there is that great temptation to meet numbers, to lower standards. And so I want each of you to address that, starting with the United States Army.

General SEAMANDS. Chairman, thank you for the question.

I will tell you, the Army leadership has been very clear to me and our recruiting command: It is quality over quantity. If we can't make the quantity you have allowed us to access this year for the end strength, it is my job to come back to you and tell you why we can't do it, but we will not sacrifice quality.

A couple points. Your description of our soldiers as extraordinary, that is a really good word to describe who they are. They impress me and inspire me each and every day.

As the Army is growing again, thanks to your work, what we did is we went back to look at the last time we grew in 2008. And we made some mistakes back in 2008, and we are not making those mistakes now. Back in 2008, we were focused more on quantity than quality. That is not happening now.

On a personal level, sir, I entered the Army in the early eighties, and we had a lot of problems back in those days. And I don't want—I love our Army, and I don't want to go back to those days. And I speak, I think, for the leadership and speak for the commanders across the force; they don't want to either.

So we will remain focused on quality and quantity. If we have to sacrifice one, it will be the quantity.

Thank you, sir.

Admiral BURKE. Yes, sir, I would echo what General Seamands said for the Army. We are not going to sacrifice quality.

What we have done, though, is taken a good, hard look at self-imposed policies that limit the spectrum of candidates that we look at. For example, we are engaging with our medical experts to make sure that our medical standards, the Navy's side of the medical standards, are up to date with societal norms, making sure that we are not negatively impacting fleet readiness. For example, someone that may have used medication for bronchitis, you know, does that equate to having asthma, type of things, that at one point may have been medically disqualifying, those sorts of things.

We have used the full latitude of the title 10 authority that you have given us for age limits and opened it up for both officer programs, where there are no physical limitations, such as, for exam-

ple, pilots or nuclear programs where there are physiological concerns, but everywhere else we have opened them up to the full latitude, and enlisted programs as well.

And then we are looking at single-parent policies as well, where you have an older single parent where they have demonstrated they can responsibly care for those children and could translate that into military service. So we have opened up our doors to those sorts of situations as well.

And then the last part is our recruiting techniques. As we are entering our transformation, we have really shifted our recruiting techniques to more of a virtual basis. We still rely on our recruiters as sort of the boots-on-ground deal-closers, but we are getting into new markets, places where we haven't been able to get our message through before. So we are getting that message through and getting the talent that we couldn't.

Mr. COFFMAN. General Grosso.

General GROSSO. Yes, sir. We have not found any real challenges in recruiting. We are recruiting the same quality that we have been able to recruit, and we have been able to meet our recruiting goals across the total force.

But what we have done, to your point about growing end strength, ma'am, is we have laid in the end strength at a reasonable pace over the FYDP [Future Years Defense Program] so that we don't overtax both the recruiting and the training sources that make them airmen.

And so we have put a little bit of resourcing. We have increased the number of recruiters. We have stabilized the marketing budget, because what you find in the past is, as we have decreased, you see this huge sine wave in the marketing budget. And any marketer will tell you, you always have to be in the market. So we have stabilized the marketing budget.

And, much like the Navy, we are modernizing the way we find airmen as well, because you find that is a process that hasn't really had much of a process improvement. And so how do we find airmen that we don't find today using technology, and better leveraging all of our resourcing capacity, making it less stovepiped.

Mr. COFFMAN. General Rocco.

General ROCCO. As I stated in my opening remarks, 99 percent are Tier 1. The number is actually 99.86 percent Tier 1, of the recruits. We recruited approximately 31,000 Marines into the Marine Corps this year. Out of that, only about 70 percent of them will serve past their first tour. And that is based on the personal requirements and based on the needs of the Marine Corps.

When we talk about first-term enlistments, those first-term Marines that will only serve their first term, that want to stay on and do a second tour, we are at 92.9 percent of those Marines that are coming in that want to stay in the Marine Corps. That is where we are at right now for retaining those Marines.

And it is not a first in, first out. We actually have the ability to look at those Marines that want to stay in, have boards, and only retain the highest quality of those Marines, including second-term Marines that—we are at 99.5 percent of those Marines that want to stay in, that we retain.

So we think we are in a good place. MCRC [Marine Corps Recruiting Command] has done a lot to go out to the markets and expand beyond that, to ensure that we hit markets and folks that perhaps we haven't touched in the past.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you.

Ranking Member Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to defer and allow my colleague to ask the first set of questions, Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Well, I thank the ranking member for deferring and thank the chairman and ranking member for holding this hearing.

As you all have noted in your testimony, the volatile nature of today's security environment and the complexity of threats our country faces do require the military services to recruit from a talent pool that is as broad, as talented, and as diverse as possible.

To underscore this point, a study cited by the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, DACOWITS, found that only 29 percent of young people ages 18 to 23 are eligible to serve after adjustments are made for individuals who are disqualified based on standards for medical/physical health, weight, mental health, drug usage, conduct, aptitude, and who have dependents.

And, Admiral, you referenced you are looking at some of these filters, but nevertheless.

Of that eligible population, more than half are women. So, after you apply all these filters, what you are left with is a much smaller group. Over half, just over half are women. However, less than 20 percent of today's Active Duty force is comprised of women.

So this study, in my mind, makes clear that, in an era where the eligible military recruiting population remains on the decline, it is more important now than ever that we recruit from the entire population and not overlook the opportunity that half of the eligible Nation's talent pool would provide the services in order to be the best services in the world.

So, with that in mind, I would like each of you to comment on what your service is doing to recruit and retain women in the services.

And we will start with you, General.

General SEAMANDS. Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate the question.

A couple things. One, for our recruiting command as well as for our source of commissionings for ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] and West Point, we are reaching out to females to encourage them to come in. And what we have seen at ROTC as well as West Point, it has increased in female applications and females being accepted, which will help as they come in the Army improve.

I think part of that is, as we did the gender integration and opened up all the specialties, the Army has enjoyed such success, where we have an infantry company commander female in the 82nd Airborne Division. We have lieutenants. We just had our last, most recent two Ranger School graduates last week graduate from a very difficult course at Fort Benning.

I think as we see those role models come out and successfully lead—and they are doing wonderful things in our formations—I think you will see increased females across the formations. We are

very excited about what the females are doing in the Army, and I think there is no limit to what they can do in the future. We are very excited.

Ms. TSONGAS. I thank you for that.

And as we are moving down the line, can you also include, kind of, how you are addressing your messaging so that, as young women are watching what they see on TV, wherever, what they are doing; and how you are also addressing a culture that encourages retention. Because I know, as we have served on this subcommittee, we have seen there are issues that are unique to women who seek to serve their country but who often find barriers to lengthening out their term of service.

But we will start with you, Admiral.

Admiral BURKE. Yes, ma'am.

Just in terms of where we are right now, last year's Naval Academy graduating class, 27 percent women. Six of the top 10 graduates were women. Our enlisted accessions for the last 2 years have been 26 and 27 percent women.

It is an operational imperative for the Navy to increase our numbers of women. So we are, frankly, targeting them in our recruiting efforts, in our messaging, because that is where the talent is. Fifty-two percent of technical graduates at America's colleges are women. That is where the talent is, so we are very aggressively going after them.

Our new ad campaigns prominently feature women. Our most recent one has a female submariner earning her dolphins at the front of it. The first one that was released at the Army-Navy game in December, the first one of our new ad campaign, has a female sailor saluting at the end of it. So we are really trying to highlight situations that women could see themselves as a career in the Navy.

The retention efforts, things like the Career Intermission Program, Navy is the biggest user of that. We highlight that.

But the other element of this, as part of Sailor 2025, one of the pillars of that is career readiness. And one of the initiatives under there is to make the Navy a place where you can have life-work balance. We want sailors to have a longer career, and we want them to be able to achieve life-work balance to do things like occasionally put family matters in perspective and not have to pay a penalty for your career.

That applies to men and women. And the Navy has a little bit of a problem with occasionally doing that for both men and women.

So we are working hard to do that if we are going to expect people to have a longer career. We need them to have longer careers so we can bring fewer sailors in the front door and get a higher return on investment from those sailors.

Ms. TSONGAS. Admiral, I am out of time, but, General Grosso and General Rocco, if you could submit an answer, a written answer, I would appreciate it.

Mr. COFFMAN. Why don't you go ahead and take another minute.

Ms. TSONGAS. Okay.

Go ahead, then. Let's move down the line here.

General GROSSO. Representative Tsongas, I would say it starts with the messaging. And I am going to steal the words from our

Secretary, but if you ask any person in the population who was their first protector and defender, it was their mother. And so we have to change the messaging, that there is a place for women.

And I think we also have to have women out—see that women can be successful. I feel like it is my personal responsibility to go to events so women can see that you can progress and there is a place for you.

I think our recruiting efforts as well as we get rid of those stovepipes, as people come to talk to us, there are so many opportunities: full-time, part-time, Guard, Reserve, civilian even. I went to an event and I had a woman tell me she didn't like sweating. I said, 25 percent of our force are civilians; would you like to come be a civilian?

So I think that is the recruiting side.

On the retention side, RAND just finished a study for us, and there are definitely some systemic things we need to do. Childcare was a big one of them. And I don't think that is just a women's issue, but if families can't take care of their children, we are not going to retain them.

The other thing that was very clear from women is, they—and this was literally in the study—they want to get off the escalator. And so we have to have some way to figure out DOPMA reform, whether it is technical tracks so that they can be more technical—and they also asked for maybe opportunities to cross-train into career fields that may be more suitable to having a family.

So there is some systemic work that we are looking at as well.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you.

General ROCCO. That is an important question, and thank you, Representative Tsongas.

So the Marine Corps, as you know, we have opened up all occupational fields now and are represented throughout the Marine Corps. That is one issue.

Second, from the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, we have gone places that we haven't gone in the past. Mail-outs now go to both male, female.

Athletics, coaches—we have opened up programs to basically have access, both at the high school level and the collegiate level, to athletics, both on the male and female side. We run education and coach workshops so the Marine Corps recruiters can have access to a population that we in the past have not had access to.

And, of course, our advertising campaign has focused on not only diversity but females, and we have been more aggressive in displaying a diverse Marine Corps.

Thank you.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you all for your testimony, and I appreciate your work. I mean, there is much to be done, but we want to have the best services possible, so we need to recruit fully from all that this country offers.

Mr. COFFMAN. Dr. Abraham, you are now recognized.

Dr. ABRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses for being here.

General Grosso, I will start with you. We all understand that when a pilot gets through with the Air Force training specifically, that 10-year commitment, that the civilian side is, at that day,

dangling a check sometimes three and four times more than what they are getting paid for the Air Force. And, fortunate or unfortunate, we understand that is the reality.

And I understand all the services are in shortage of aviators. It is my understanding that the Air Force is probably more in a shortage area, because they employ more aviators, just logistically.

So the question is, specifically, what is the Air Force doing to retain that aviator, where he or she has invested and the Air Force has invested so much time and treasure and then, all of a sudden, poof, the next day they are flying for a Delta or a Southwest?

General GROSSO. So we have several lines of effort to retain aviators. But what we find is that this is very cyclical, and if you look at the data, it is highly correlated to airline hiring.

And so it is incumbent upon us to do all we can to retain airmen, and so some of it is how do we give them the better quality of work. It is very clear that there are duties we need to take off their plate, and we are working that. We have funded that in the budget. So administrative duties that take away from their ability to fly.

We have to fund weapons systems sustainment and maintainers so that those planes are ready for them to fly, to fly more.

And we need to give them more flexibility in our systems. We are working hard, from an assignments perspective, to get more input from the airmen, from our aviators, and so maybe have less disruption from assignments.

We are also looking at ways to incentivize long deployments away from their family so that we lose less people because it doesn't meet their family needs.

But we have also understood that we can't retain our way out of this challenge, so you have to produce more. And we have to take a hard look at the requirements as well.

Dr. ABRAHAM. So, in that line, you mentioned your college intern program—

General GROSSO. Yes, sir.

Dr. ABRAHAM [continuing]. As a pipeline for maybe more aviators coming in. I guess my question is, are you getting much resistance across the college spectrum of that type of intern program being on those campuses?

General GROSSO. Sir, just to be clear, that intern program is for civilians, so not our military aviators. But we—

Dr. ABRAHAM. I understand that, but you are on college campuses touting this—am I correct there?—trying to bring those students into the armed services.

General GROSSO. Yes, sir. No, we have actually had great success. What you find on the civilian side is it takes us so long to hire that we don't keep them. And so the authorities Congress gave us to directly hire them and offer them jobs in their junior year is really the way we are competing for talent—in particular, STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] talent.

Dr. ABRAHAM. Because I know you have to pick them up early in their curriculum, either the sophomore, no later than the junior, because, if not, a civilian contractor or business is going to be already tugging and putting a check in front of them.

General GROSSO. Exactly. Exactly. And that is why the authorities you gave us are critical, and then us being able to execute those authorities.

Dr. ABRAHAM. Okay.

And, Admiral Burke, I know on the Navy side but in all the services, you know, cyber shortages is an issue. And I think cyber and certainly space is our next domain of fighting.

Specifically for the Navy, on cyber, what are you guys doing to hold on to those people? I mean, that is somewhat of a different culture, as far as the cyber mindset, in my world. That takes a little kind of an outside-the-box thinking, so that is some type of a different personality. Any comments on that?

Admiral BURKE. Yes, sir. Our big challenges are on the senior enlisted technical leaders. So they will grow to sort of the E-5, E-6 level, and then they will be poached off by commercial, you know, entities right when they are maturing to the point where they are going to be eligible for maybe one of our warrant officer programs at the E-6 or E-7 level, where they would be a technical manager for us.

So one of the things we just employed was, instead of a commissioned warrant officer, we went with a W-1 program that made E-5s eligible for this. That was within our existing service authorities, to use that option. That made junior E-5s eligible and then made them, you know, available for that program for many, many more years.

So that opened the pool to many more sailors. We have to be a little more careful about screening those sailors, looking harder for the potential, but we know how to do that pretty well. And then we get them in, into the leadership position, and then they can blossom from there.

So we have just implemented that. That is getting off the ground. Too early to tell if that will succeed. But we will at least get, you know, 3 to 4 years out of them once they get into the warrant officer program, so that will buy some time out of it.

The other area that we are having a little bit of a challenge in is, you know, we have, on the officer side, our operators, both on the offensive and defensive side, we are doing okay on there. It is the engineers, the folks that are developing the payload packages, if you will.

We grow those right now. You gave us some legislative authority to bring them in with the equivalent of 3 years of experience laterally. That is about, you know, a lieutenant junior grade in the Navy or a first lieutenant in the other services, but it is about a \$50,000 pay. In Silicon Valley, these folks would be, you know, up over \$100,000. So lateraling them in.

The mission and the service appeals to these folks, but there is an equivalent excepted cyber civilian program that allows the government to pay in the closer to \$100,000 range. So they seem to be preferentially going to the government service rather than the military service option.

So that is an area we are having a challenge in. So we are still growing them from the ground up rather than bringing them in at the level. But retention is where it is right now.

Dr. ABRAHAM. Thank you.

Thank you for the extra time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Ms. Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here and for your service.

I think you have heard loud and clear that we are not interested in seeing lower quality, even though you have a great challenge ahead of you. We want to be part of making sure you can meet the challenge.

So, as I am listening to you, I am realizing, I wonder to what extent our efforts in terms of recruiting and looking at personnel issues are relative to our, you know, fathers' or grandfathers' military service.

I think Vice Admiral Burke mentioned looking at disqualifiers. So what I would like each of you to provide to the committee is what the disqualifiers are for all those who actually do apply or who become recruited. You may not have those figures for us now, or those specifics, so if you would just provide that to us, that would be appreciated.

Secondly, in talking to those who actually were purveyors of MREs [meals, ready-to-eat] recently that had a presentation for us and they were showing us how they were beefing up the calcium in some of their products, I was told that there is about 10 percent of those who are recruited during basic training that wash out. So I would like to know from each of you if that is the case. And they wash out because of hairline fractures.

So could you each address that particular issue for me, please?

General SEAMANDS. Thank you very much for the question, ma'am.

Within the Army, about 10 percent wash out during basic training for a variety of reasons, including medical issues. And we are taking a look at that. Within the Active force, across the total force, about 80 percent of our nondeployables are medically related, and musculoskeletal is one of the biggest portions of that population.

Ms. SPEIER. So, if you could provide the specifics on the nondeployables, of that 80 percent, and then the 10 percent, how many of them fall into that musculoskeletal.

Yes, Vice Admiral.

Admiral BURKE. Yes, ma'am. We have about 12 percent attrition at Recruit Training Command. The overwhelming majority of that, 95 percent of that is nondisclosed preexisting medical conditions, things that weren't disclosed in the recruiting process that would have been medical—

Ms. SPEIER. Is that the use of an inhaler?

Admiral BURKE. Well, those are the things we are trying to change the policy on, but it is things—and when we come across those, we change it right then and there. But it is things that are no-kidding, insurmountable medical things that, you know, we can't get through.

So we are actually working through some Privacy Act issues with, for example, being able to look at the medical records of dependent children of military members and look at public military records so you are not completely dependent on what the individuals, you know, write and tell you about, the ability to actually be able to go look in medical systems and see these things ahead of

time. And we are making some progress working with the Department of Defense on that.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.
Lieutenant General.

General GROSSO. Representative, I have not seen the current data, but I believe it is about 6 or 7 percent. But I will get you the exact number.

Having been the commander there several years ago, we didn't typically separate somebody if they had a stress fracture. We tried to rehabilitate them. Because, depending on the severity, it usually could be 2, 3, or 4 weeks out of training. So we didn't typically send them home for stress fractures.

But I will get you that exact data.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

General ROCCO. In the Marine Corps, our non-EAS [end of active service] attrition at boot camp is closer to 20 percent. Most of it is, as Admiral Burke had mentioned, nondisclosed issues, because a lot of the medical is self-reporting. But I can give you the specifics on the breakdown of what exactly that number is.

As we get beyond boot camp, our non-EAS attrition goes down to about 3 percent.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay.

One of the things that was recommended is that the calcium is beefed up before they come into basic training to avoid some of those issues. And I don't know to what extent that is attempted through recruiting.

How about retention after their first term? What is the percentage that you are able to retain? Could each of you tell us that, please?

General SEAMANDS. Ma'am, about a third of the people who enlist don't make it to their initial reenlistment window for a variety of reasons, either separation or medical issues within the Army.

Ms. SPEIER. Well, how many actually could continue, could re-up, but don't, is what I want to know.

General SEAMANDS. On the retention, we have historically—over 80 percent of our eligible population to reenlist are reenlisting and staying in uniform in the Army.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay. Thank you.

Admiral BURKE. We are averaging, Navy-wide, around 60 percent.

General GROSSO. So our first-term retention is 60 percent. But we do, for various reasons, lose about a third. So if you looked at who started basic training and who gets to that first term, it is about a third that aren't there.

General ROCCO. And for the Marine Corps, we, by design, lose about 70 percent of that cohort or those recruits in that year. When I say "lose," those are—we need about a third of them to stay in the Marine Corps, to re-up for a second enlistment. So, by design, by rank structure, most of that, 70 percent of those recruits in that given year do the first-term enlistment and then leave, some voluntary and some we just don't have the space for.

As I mentioned in my remarks, we are at—retaining FTAP [First Term Alignment Plan], we are at 92 percent. And we have more Marines right now who want to stay in than we have boat spaces for.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you very much.

Mr. COFFMAN. Dr. Wenstrup, you are now recognized.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is good to see you all today.

Ms. Speier, there is a part of me that would like to be sitting over there today, as an Army podiatrist, to talk about treatment and prevention of stress fractures and injuries that we could do a whole lot more on. And I will be glad to engage with you more on that. We might need a whole other hearing on that. And I would be glad to do that. And it is more than just adding calcium, because it is biomechanical.

And I will just address to you, General Seamands, if you don't mind, for the sake of time, I want to go through the recruiting process. When someone wants to join, they go through the process; they have checked all the boxes as being eligible. The recruiter then—and I am thinking more enlisted at this point, young people. What MOS [military occupational specialty] do you want? What is it you want to do in the military?

I was so impressed, when I deployed, that 90 percent of our enlisted that were eligible for reenlistment while we were in theater took that. I don't know that that is the case across the board, but it was pretty impressive, especially when you consider where they are making that decision, which was in theater.

And so it occurs to me—and I have asked people, you know, when they joined and they met with the recruiter, did the recruiter say, yeah, what do you want to do in the Army, but what do you want to do after? Whether it is 20-years-plus or 4 years, are we investing the way we should in their success?

In other words, what does success look like to us? Yeah, it is successful if someone reenlists. You know, we have some retention. That is successful, and that is one of the career paths we should be talking about. But are we talking about, what is your long-term success?

Because when you talk about marketing, when you talk about recruiting, if the military is perceived as the place to go because there is going to be something good at the end, whether it is in uniform or not, I think we will recruit and retain even better.

So I would like to hear from all of you on that—we will start with you—on that notion of, day one, what do you want to do after this?

General SEAMANDS. Thank you, sir. That is actually part of the discussion recruiters have. These are the MOSes you qualify for. What is your passion? What do you aspire for? And in some cases talk about life after the Army.

We also start that discussion when they arrive at basic training in the AIT [Advanced Individual Training], and it continues on through the time they are in uniform, thanks to the VOW Act that you passed a few years ago. It is a conscious decision. And you can see the effect of that from commanders, command sergeant majors, and first sergeants engaging.

If you go back about 5 years, our unemployment compensation was almost half a billion dollars we were paying. Last year, it was \$127 million. So what is happening is our Soldier for Life programs, our education, training, and credentialing that we work through the programs, tuition assistance, in order to return a better citizen back to their community, is evidenced in the lower unemployment.

So that is a discussion we have throughout their—because once they come in, we want to make sure they are set up for a smooth takeoff as they leave.

Admiral BURKE. Yes, sir. Similar, when our sailors come in, we test them for aptitude, of course, as all the services do. We also have a test that is called JOIN, Job Opportunities in the Navy, that tests their interests. And we have found a high correlation between—sort of, the sweet spot between the two is about a 75 percent match between the two, and that gives us a much higher retention. You know, if you are good at it and you like it—and not necessarily the peak of both—you will stay, because you are challenged in something, for a lot longer period of time.

In addition to all the many educational opportunities that we offer to, you know, improve oneself, to help you later on in life, either inside the military or outside the military, the certification, Navy certification opportunities online. We have over 1,900 credentialing opportunities. There is at least one credentialing opportunity for the job skills. Every single sailor could get at least one credentialing opportunity. And that is to, you know, show that they have been tested to industry standards.

And then the U.S. Military Apprenticeship Program gives them the experiential documentation as well.

So we will provide those things, all to help them be better citizens, more productive employment opportunity when they get out.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

General GROSSO. I think ours is very similar as well. We do aptitude testing. And, for the most part, most airmen that come in have a skill that they—they know what they want to do, and they typically get that skill. It is not that common, unless they don't qualify.

And then Military Tuition Assistance really helps—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Sure.

General GROSSO [continuing]. Set them up for the future. And typically what you will find is that they study something they want to do when they leave. We have an interestingly large number of people that study early education, early childhood education. And we believe that must be because that is something that they choose to do beyond their service.

The other thing is we have an accredited associate's program in the Air Force, a Community College of the Air Force. So very few, if any, enlisted members leave without at least their associate's degree.

General ROCCO. So, knowing full well that we are going to return 70 percent of those enlistees after their first enlistment, we spend a lot of time focusing on exactly that. We want to return good citizens back after they serve in the Marine Corps.

So we encourage tuition assistance, we encourage the use of the GI Bill while on Active Duty to go ahead and pursue some further education. MECEP [Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Educational Program], ECP, those enlisted commissioning programs that we have, we fully endorse.

And in our transition courses, they are full with job fairs and credentialing organizations that will help those Marines take the skills that they have learned in the Marine Corps and transition them to a civilian job.

Dr. WENSTRUP. You know, I think just all too often the general public doesn't realize—you hear about anyone who has a difficulty after their service, but we don't hear enough about the military being a pathway to a successful civilian life. And I think that is really what I would like to see promoted more and change the perception that some people have. Because I think we all know the great majority of people who serve end up in a better place.

I yield back.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Russell, you are now recognized.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today.

One of the things that we are exploring in this year's authorization is the ability to train—and this one will be kind of an officer-training-related question. You have people, maybe, with a 4-year scholarship program or they are at the service academies, and then for whatever reason—this is not a high population, but it is a high investment—they have some injury that will preclude a commissioning.

And, in talking to the vices and others, it is like—and through no fault of their own. You know, they are not punished. But then they are released to the American public as a whole, yes, maybe better citizens and all of that, but all the investment is gone.

And so one of the things that we are looking at maybe exploring is to translate them, if they are precluded from taking a commission, to go into the Department of Defense workforce and fulfill their service obligation in that direction. And I would just be curious of your thoughts on that.

General GROSSO. Sir, if I could comment first.

We are already doing that. We have had several academy cadets, to your very example, that had a medical issue pop up literally weeks before graduation, and, with your direct hiring authorities, we brought them into the civilian workforce—

Mr. RUSSELL. But that was voluntary, is it not, I mean, under the current law?

General GROSSO. Yes, sir. It is absolutely voluntary.

Mr. RUSSELL. Right. Because if they were healthy, they would have a service obligation, and they would be required to serve still a 5-year commitment, I guess, for service academies, 4-year scholarship commissionings. Is that correct?

General GROSSO. Correct.

Mr. RUSSELL. And that is great, you know, that we are doing that. If we made that a requirement—I mean, it is not unjust. There has been a great investment there. And I would love to have your thoughts on that.

General SEAMANDS. Sir, I support that. I think it is a great opportunity. They have a propensity to serve. In many cases, they want to serve. And I think we have given them a great education, so I think that is an appropriate payback.

Admiral BURKE. Sir, we would support it as well. Like the Air Force, we seek volunteers to come into the government service. We do the same thing when there has been an injury. For, like, medical scholarships, we actively try to, you know, rather than recoup, get them to come in as a civilian doctor, for example. And there is always quite a high interest rate in taking those options, but we would support making it mandatory.

General GROSSO. We would support it, sir.

General ROCCO. And the Marine Corps would also support it. I think it is a wonderful—you talk about the quality of the men and women that go to the service academies, and, as you say, through no fault of their own, they cannot serve. Exposing them to a Department of Defense job that they perhaps wouldn't have been exposed to, I think, opens up benefits to both the student and also the organization.

Mr. RUSSELL. Well, look for it heading your way, I guess. And, you know, it is something we will continue to work on, Mr. Chairman, and it is something that we are looking at for this year's NDAA. But I really appreciate your thoughts on it, and it is valuable to have your comments on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. COFFMAN. We will have a second quick round.

Ranking Member Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Lieutenant General Grosso actually referenced having a high retention rate but low retention in terms of linguistic analysts, special operations aircraft maintenance, and nuclear medicine specialties. I would like to know if you have categorized the areas where you have problems in terms of retention.

I think that is part of the key here. If we invest as much money as we do to get them through boot camp and have them serve for a period of, you know, 18 months afterwards or, you know, 2 years afterwards and then have them not continue, I mean, that is a loss of, what, \$80,000.

So could you tell me, what are the areas in each of your services where you are having issues with retention?

General SEAMANDS. Ma'am, thank you for the question.

Within the Army, I think with all the other services, aviation is one of them. And we are attacking that with increased training throughput as well as bonuses to encourage people to continue to serve.

The other area I would offer is cyber. We don't have a problem accessing them because there are a lot of people who are interested in being cyber soldiers. We think at some point in the future, because they have a 6-year obligation, we will have a problem with retention. So our strategy is to treat them and recognize what they are doing now in terms of bonuses and their credentialing, in order to hopefully have them continue to serve and want to continue to serve in the future.

But I would say aviation and cyber are the two issues.

Admiral BURKE. Yes, ma'am. For us, it is the nuclear specialties, nuclear propulsion, that is; and cyber, including linguistics, the same as the Air Force; aviation and mechanical and structural rates on the enlisted side; pilots, of course, retention on the officer side; and then the special warfare folks.

General GROSSO. And, ma'am, you mentioned ours, but we track every single career field extensively, because, in an up-or-out system, you only retain what you need. And so, for the most part, if you look in the aggregate, we have very strong retention. We just have these pockets. But you have given us plenty of authority in special and incentive pays, and, really, the key for us is to target them where we need them.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

General ROCCO. Yes, ma'am. So cyber is always a challenge. Part of the challenge we are having with cyber is that the other MOSes, the other specialties that we are drawing upon are usually signals intelligence, the schools that the Marines go and spend a lot of time at, so they are in high demand.

The other one, we mentioned aviation maintenance. We have included aviation, what we call bonuses, for the enlisted side. So those Marines that work on aircraft, those specialties—and they have certain specialties inside of those CDIs [collateral duty inspectors] and different aviation specialties—we have given them extra bonuses, which has stabilized the population.

Ms. SPEIER. Lieutenant General, Congresswoman Tsongas made the case that targeting women is going to be key moving forward in the military. You know, it takes me back 40 years when I was a staffer and went to West Point and asked the audacious question as to why women couldn't be accepted into the academies. And we have actually moved forward a little bit since then, but, at the time, it was because they couldn't serve in combat. That was the rationale.

So there really is no rationale anymore, but it appears the Marines have really lagged behind all the other services in terms of incorporating women, both in terms of training—they are still being trained separately from men—and just the general sense that women don't belong in the Marines.

So could you address how you are going to be more embracing of women, much like the other services have?

General ROCCO. And that is an important—

Ms. SPEIER. In 1 minute.

General ROCCO. Certainly. And that is an important question.

So we recently opened up Marine Combat Training-West, which is where we send all non-infantry Marines. So if you are an administrative or just a non-infantry, you will go to Marine Corps Combat Training to learn how to be a Marine and a Marine first. So we have recently opened that up to females.

And, as far as everything else, we have opened up all occupational fields. So, again, it is voluntary to go into some of these more ground-centric, load-bearing units, but we understand that we are making progress, albeit slow, but we are making progress.

We have stood up the Personnel Studies Office, which is headed by Ms. Melissa Cohen, to go out and ensure that commanders are

trained and units are trained on unconscious bias and some of the things that perhaps have prevented some of that in the past.

So we are talking proactive steps to ensure that women are accepted in every MOS and in every level of the Marine Corps.

Ms. SPEIER. How many generals do you have that are women?

General ROCCO. We have two. I am sorry. General Reynolds, General Shea, and we just recently—General Mahlock. So it will be three.

Ms. SPEIER. Three out of how many?

General ROCCO. Eighty-two Active.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

Thank you.

Mr. COFFMAN. General Bacon, you are now recognized.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

It is hard to do two committee hearings and a speech, so I am glad I caught you on the tail end of this. Thank you for being here. And it is good to be with some friends I have served with. And I appreciate your expertise and your leadership.

I want to ask you, what is the impact so far that you have seen on the blended retirement? Are we seeing any kind of negative, adverse retention from that, or recruitment?

Thank you.

General SEAMANDS. Thanks for asking.

We monitor that pretty closely. So far, about 9 percent of the Active and about 3 percent of the Guard and Reserve have opted in to the blended retirement.

I think it is going to be a significant indicator on retention in the out-years, and I think we are going to have to fundamentally change how we address retaining talent. Today, if I keep somebody, an officer, an NCO, to 10 years, I have a pretty high probability I will keep them to 20. I think that dynamic could potentially change, but we won't see that, probably, for the next 7 maybe to 10 years, so we need to be prepared. And we are thinking about it now, trying to get our heads around it.

Mr. BACON. And I think you are right. My hunch is people are going to get out at the 17-year point because they won't have that big cliff they are facing.

General SEAMANDS. Absolutely. So the blended retirement essentially reduces the cost of the impact of getting out, potentially. And so I think we need to be creative in how we address that and work to retain our talent.

Mr. BACON. Anybody else?

Admiral BURKE. Sir, we are not seeing any impacts yet, but we continue to watch it closely as well.

We really appreciate the flexibility you gave us in last year's NDAA to move the continuation pay component. It gave us some years to move it around. So our plan is to sort of use that and complement that with other retention incentives to offset.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

General GROSSO. I don't think we have enough data yet. So we know the data in the aggregate. We don't know what skill sets there are, so I am very curious to see that data. But I agree that it does fundamentally change—it is a big change, and how we manage that continuation pay is going to be critical.

Mr. BACON. Okay.

General ROCCO. And I will just pile on. The continuation pay is going to be key. Right now, we have 25 percent of the Marine Corps has chosen, and, out of that, 70 percent have opted in to BRS [Blended Retirement System].

Mr. BACON. So what I'm hearing is, some positive indicators, but yet it is still too early to really say. And yet there is a fear that we are going to have a hard time retaining people through 20, is sort of how I have analyzed you-all's inputs.

Something I have mentioned to Colonel Grosso, or General Grosso—I am sorry; you were lieutenant colonel, colonel, one-star, all the way up—General Grosso, excuse me—is the pilot bonuses.

I think we need to have the data at some point. If, say, 55 percent of our pilots stay in—I am just throwing a number out there—we say that is a success for the bonuses. But yet we don't know, if there wasn't, if, say, 50 percent of that 55 would have still signed up. And I think at some point we need to have some kind of data that says that these bonuses are having this kind of impact.

And that is something I have mentioned before, but—I know we always look at the retention that we have, but we don't know how many we would have retained anyway without the bonus.

So your thoughts?

General GROSSO. Yes, sir, there is clearly economic rent, which is what you are discussing, and I think that is very hard to know.

But the one thing that it does is it locks the person in, and so it helps us know what we do keep. But I completely agree with you, it is an imprecise tool.

Mr. BACON. Okay.

General GROSSO. We actually have some other options coming your way that we are just finally socializing.

Mr. BACON. And I agree the commitment thing is important, so I won't, you know, disparage that part. It would just be nice to know if we are getting a 5 percent payoff added or 10 or—I think it would be helpful to be able to substantiate just what the impact really is, and I don't think we know.

And, finally, I just want to—I know the Air Force is—I have been hearing a little bit about it, but I don't know if anybody else is doing this too—but enlisted aviators. Could you give us an update, how we are doing there?

General GROSSO. It is going very well. So it is clear that our enlisted airmen are just as talented, and they are doing well going through the course. We are just starting to implement them in the operational units, so I think that piece—we are just starting the cultural piece and how do we get that right. But it is clear that they are successful.

Mr. BACON. So far, only in remote-piloted aircraft?

General GROSSO. Yes, sir.

Mr. BACON. Okay, so nothing else.

Any of the other services?

General SEAMANDS. Sir, most of our aviators are warrant officers. Many of them came from the enlisted force.

Mr. BACON. Okay.

Well, thank you very much.

I yield back.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Russell.

Mr. RUSSELL. Nothing.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you.

I just want to close with one issue that I want to mention to you, and that is, I have seen this for a very long time, where, in the MEPS [Military Entrance Processing Station] process, somebody is deemed physically qualified, we pay to send them to basic training in their respective branch of service, where they are given another physical and they are deemed unqualified.

Now, you know, that is a waste of money and time. And I don't know if it is just a false feeling of warmth to try and get the numbers up initially or what it is, but it ought to be the same standard. There shouldn't be a disparity.

And, you know, I saw it when I was in the military, but I also see it today, when a family calls me and says, you know, my son just reported—the last example was Navy recruit training. And, of course, they are in limbo as they are trying to be administratively processed out.

And so, you know, we need to get this straight. And there needs to be one standard, and it needs to be consistent.

And so I wish to thank the witnesses for their enlightening testimony this afternoon.

There being no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

APRIL 13, 2018

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 13, 2018

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT BY
LTG THOMAS C. SEAMANDS
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1
UNITED STATES ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

SECOND SESSION, 115TH CONGRESS

ON ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

MARCH 21, 2018

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of this committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

Our Army is the most formidable ground combat force on earth because of the courage and commitment of the Soldiers, Civilians, Veterans, and Family Members who serve our Nation. Our people are our greatest asset as we position the Total Army Force to meet security demands around the globe. It is imperative that we remain focused on responsible growth of the Army and world-class programs that provide continued care and resources for Soldiers and their Families.

The Army is globally engaged, supporting combatant command missions with approximately 178,000 Soldiers committed in 140 countries. The Army's forward presence and stationing builds partner capacity, assures our allies, and deters aggressors. The continued need for a ready force -- fully manned, trained, and equipped is evidenced daily by international events. Consistent, strategy-based funding is critical to the Army accomplishing its missions.

Manning the Army is one of the key components of readiness and is vital to the Army's ability to fight and win our Nation's wars. Our Total Army is comprised of the Active Component (AC), the Army Reserve (USAR), and the Army National Guard (ARNG). The FY18 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) authorized a Total Army end strength increase of 8,500 to 1,026,500 Soldiers (483,500 AC; 199,500 USAR; 343,500 ARNG). This increase will help us improve readiness and ensure the Army has fully manned formations in the coming years.

Today only one in four 17-24 year-olds in the U.S. is eligible to serve in the Army, and only one in eight has a propensity to enlist in the military, making Army accessions a challenging and resource-intensive activity. The Army achieved its FY17 recruiting mission of 68,500 Active Component recruits with more than 96% of them holding high school diplomas. The ARNG filled 85.5% of their mission goal of 40,000, and the USAR

filled 92.2% of their mission goal of 14,400. For FY18, the recruiting missions are 80K for the Active Component, 44.3K for the ARNG, and 15.6K for the USAR. We are aggressively working both accession and retention missions needed to achieve the 8,500 Soldier growth in end strength for the Total Army provided for in the FY18 NDAA. We are committed to holding quality high by using enlistment bonus incentives and expanding prior service enlistments to help reach our goal. We are also pursuing efforts to positively leverage our Soldier for Life population to assist in achieving our accessions mission and continue to maintain an all-volunteer force.

While the Army projects recruiting challenges for all components, maintaining recruit quality will continue to be a priority, and the Army won't sacrifice quality for numbers. The Army is committed to achieving the DoD Quality Benchmarks: greater than 90% Tier I High School Diploma Graduates (Total Army currently at 94.7%); greater than 60% Test Score Category I-III (Total Army currently at 62%); and less than 4% Test Score Category IV (Total Army currently at 1.6%). The Army routinely exceeds the DoD Quality Benchmarks and is committed to sustaining that success. The Army is successfully using retention, recruiting, and reduced attrition to reach and maintain Congressionally mandated end strength levels without compromising quality and will continue to do so. The Army is screening and evaluating applicants using a more holistic assessment—to include non-cognitive and physical assessments—which allows a careful and thorough review of the merits of each individual applicant.

The Army must continue to retain the most talented Soldiers and non-commissioned officers with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs. The AC, USAR and ARNG each achieved their FY17 retention missions. The increase in end strength for FY18 has also led us to an increase in the Army's retention mission, and we have expanded retention incentives accordingly. Each component is diligently working to accomplish their respective retention missions while maintaining standards.

Our officer corps is strong and committed to the mission, and we continue to make improvements in the diversity of our officer corps. The United States Military Academy (USMA) increased the number of female cadets from 16% in the class of 2017 to 22% in the class of 2020. The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) had similar growth in female admissions from 22% in the Class of 2017 to a projected 28% women in the Class of 2020. Additionally, the officer corps has had an increase in African American Accessions - 14% in USMA class of 2020 are African American versus 10% of the class of 2017, and projected 14% of ROTC commissions in 2020 will be African American versus an average of 11% from 2012-2017. The Army will maintain our emphasis on sustaining a high-quality All-Volunteer Force that reflects the diversity of America.

The Army strives to continuously improve efforts to assess and train the right Soldier for the right job. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command completed a physical demands study of Army specialties in 2016 and used it to develop an Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT). Since January 2017, the OPAT has been used as a physical assessment screening tool for Officer and Enlisted Accessions. Passing the OPAT ensures new Soldiers, regardless of gender, can succeed in an assigned specialty and verifies their readiness for training, minimizing injuries. Longitudinal studies on OPAT are being conducted by the Army Research Institute to measure OPAT's effect on morale, cohesion, and readiness.

The Army remains committed to giving all Soldiers who can meet the standards of a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) the opportunity to serve in that MOS. In January 2017, the Army implemented MOS-based gender-neutral physical standards to start initial entry training, and to successfully be awarded a given MOS. To date, the Army has successfully accessed and transferred more than 600 women into the previously closed occupations of Infantry, Armor, and Field Artillery.

Since 2016, 74 female officers have successfully completed the Infantry or Armor Basic Officer Leader's Course and are arriving at assignments at Forts Hood and Bragg.

In 2018, gender-neutral assignments will expand to Forts Carson, Campbell, Bliss and Italy in support of the Army's Leaders First Strategy. Additionally, the Army has transferred, trained and assigned female NCOs into both Infantry and Armor specialties. This approach sets conditions in operational units before newly trained junior enlisted Soldiers arrive. The first integrated enlisted training courses for Infantry and Armor graduated in May/June 2017 and female Soldiers were assigned to Forts Hood and Bragg. Due to a multi-year effort to open other jobs that have long been unavailable to female Soldiers, as many as 500 women currently serve in every active Brigade Combat Team in the Army down to the company level. Of significance, 10 women have graduated Ranger School and one officer is assigned to the Ranger Regiment. As the Army continues long-term studies in support of gender integration and the Soldier 2020 campaign, lessons learned will continue to enhance readiness and increase the diversity across our force using a standards-based approach.

In order to employ and retain Soldiers and maintain a capable and effective ground combat force, the Army requires a civilian workforce with unique and critical skills to support Soldiers and their families. Civilians serve across the institutional Army and enable the Army to free up Soldiers for service in the operational Army. When placed in the context of the Total Army, Civilians comprise about 22% of the Army's total personnel (Soldiers of the Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve comprise the other categories). Since 2011, the Army has been drawing down the civilian workforce from a wartime high of 285,000 full time equivalents to 239,500 at the close of FY17. These reductions were implemented to meet budget levels, military end strength reductions, and legislative mandates associated with the military drawdown.

Given the need to recover and sustain readiness, and with the increasing of military end strength, the Army will need to right size the capabilities that our Civilians give us. While we continue to implement reforms and reduce the size of headquarters activities, we recognize that Department of Army (DA) Civilians are key enablers of our readiness and operational capabilities. As the Army looks to become more lethal,

enhance both its capability and capacity, and ensure critical support to the Soldier and their Families, our DA Department of Army Civilians are an integral partner and we must ensure our workforce is sized appropriately.

Every Soldier is a valued member of the Army team and is critical to readiness and mission accomplishment. Sustaining individual personal readiness is a necessary component of maintaining the readiness of the force. The Army is improving personal readiness and individual deployability by focusing on strengthening Soldiers, building protective factors, and fostering a culture of trust to ensure successful service and unit cohesion.

We have implemented a holistic and outcome-focused proactive prevention model which drives change through visibility, routine assessment, and targeted actions. The prevention model is tailored to fit the needs of our people in diverse and challenging environments and will improve personal readiness to enhance and sustain a resilient force. This paradigm shift to a proactive prevention strategy, as opposed to one that is reactive, empowers Soldiers and leaders at all levels to promote personal readiness.

We continue to provide commanders and leaders increased visibility of their readiness with the development of the Commander's Risk Reduction Dashboard (CRRD) with anticipated Initial Operating Capability by the end of 2018. This tool provides Commanders visibility of their Soldier and unit risk history, trends, and the impacts on Personal Readiness. We are developing a predictive analytical capability for integration into the Full Operational Capability system by the end of 2019 in order for Commanders to make proactive decisions and resource allocations, based upon probability of readiness.

We are fielding *Engage*, which is a means to enable bystander intervention and improve cohesion across the force. Research indicates that Soldiers lack the expertise to successfully and routinely execute professional confrontations. *Engage* encourages

engagements across a wide variety of situations and with peers, subordinates and supervisors to enhance communication and positively influence personal readiness.

We are also executing the "Not in My Squad" initiative, developed by the Sergeant Major of the Army that is focused on squad leaders. Research has determined that squad leaders have the greatest impact on units, the individual Soldier and the climate. "Not in My Squad" facilitates self-development and helps squad leaders understand and embrace their roles as leaders in their organization.

Engage and "Not in My Squad" are being executed at the 26 Ready and Resilient Performance Centers across all components of the Army. We have certified 32,000 Master Resiliency Trainers who are resident in company-level formations and train Soldiers on 16 resiliency skills that focus on sustaining personal readiness and optimizing human performance. The goal is to have a Master Resilience Trainer for every company in the Army to coach these skills.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation are not compatible with Army Values and they diminish our readiness, therefore, combatting all forms of sexual misconduct remains a top priority for the Army. The Army, along with the Department of Defense (DoD), continues to make significant progress towards eradicating sexual assault, while encouraging more Soldiers to report the crime. Since 2012, reporting has increased approximately 59% for the Total Army (1,572- reports in FY12 compared to 2,497 reports in FY16) while prevalence has decreased 6.4% for women and 36.8% for men within the active component. As we analyze FY17 data, indications are that we will see another increase in reports. The increase in reporting and decrease in prevalence are tracking in the right direction of our DoD and Army goals. Continued progress will come from commanders eliminating sexual violence from their formations; encouraging more victims to obtain the services and support they need to heal, recover, and resume productive careers; and holding offenders appropriately accountable.

The Army is also as dedicated to providing DA Civilians with a safe, effective mechanism to report sexual assault and to seek victim support/services. During the past year, the Army implemented a pilot program for DA Civilian Sexual Harassment and Response Prevention (SHARP) services. In addition to providing full access to sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates, the pilot enabled Civilians to opt for either the Restricted or the Unrestricted Reporting option. The pilot essentially provided DA Civilians reporting parity with their uniformed service member counterparts. From January through December 2017, approximately 34 Army Civilians utilized services provided through the pilot, with five opting to file Restricted Reports. Although the pilot ended 24 January 2018, the Army is examining ways to allow us to continue to provide SHARP services, including both reporting options, to our Civilian teammates.

Another way we've increased support to our DA Civilians is through the implementation of special victims' counsel program support to Army Civilians when the offender is a Soldier and the case falls under the jurisdiction of the military. We cannot fulfill our commitment to the American public without our dedicated Army Civilians. We owe it to our country to take care of our Civilian employees the way we take care of our Soldiers.

With healthier command climates where victims feel safe to report without fear of retaliatory behaviors, the Army is continuing to place increased emphasis on prevention. We are especially focused on teaching members of the Army team how to recognize and address inappropriate behaviors identified in the left spectrum of the sexual violence continuum of harm. These behaviors include offensive jokes, hazing, cyberbullying, and other actions that create an environment that tolerates sexual violence. Historically, civilian and DOD research/studies have shown a correlation between sexual harassment and sexual assault. This research is why the Army decided to combine the sexual harassment prevention and sexual assault prevention and response programs a decade ago. We're continuing to develop tools to help Command Teams, Soldiers, and DA Civilians place greater emphasis on prevention of sexual violence.

Although we're optimistic about the progress we've made in reducing sexual violence in the ranks, we understand there's more work to be done. We will not be satisfied until America's sons and daughters can serve in our Army—a multi-generational, ethnically diverse, gender-integrated Army—without fear of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or retaliation for reporting sexual offenses. Through the continued leadership of our command teams, the expertise of our SHARP professionals, and the commitment of our Soldiers and DA Civilians, we believe this standard is achievable.

The Army's goal is to sustain the personal readiness of our Soldiers and build unit cohesion; however, suicide remains one of our most serious challenges. We remain devoted to our task of more proactively identifying indicators and developing holistic approaches to prevention. Our comprehensive approach includes strengthening our Soldiers, Leaders, and Families; building protective factors; and fostering a Culture of Trust. Suicide prevention is a complex human endeavor that requires a network of human sensors, the skills to *Engage*, continuous assessment of behaviors, and a comprehensive assistance and treatment capability.

To improve personal readiness and resiliency, we are aggressively working to decrease the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care. Behavioral Health (BH) encounters for the Total Army grew from approximately 900K in FY07 to approximately 2.25M in FY17, indicating greater trust in the system. Soldiers required 67,000 fewer inpatient bed days for all types of BH conditions in 2016, as compared to 2012. This 41% decrease, is due in part to improvements in outpatient services, Intensive Outpatient Programs, and case management.

In addition to reducing the stigma associated with seeking help, the Army has provided more timely care, especially to those with the most significant behavioral health conditions. For example, according to the 2016 DHA Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set, 96% of all Soldiers hospitalized for a behavioral health condition receive a follow-up appointment in a clinic within seven days, which far exceeds the national average for civilian treatment. Embedding behavioral health

personnel within combat units is a proven best practice – we've recently extended this effort by embedding the substance use disorder providers within Embedded BH to provide more comprehensive care.

The Army has reduced Total Army non-deployable personnel from 15% in June 2016 to 11% in December 2017. The current 11% non-deployable population includes a new category introduced summer 2016 to proactively manage expired medical and dental examinations. Excluding this category, the Total Army rate would be 9% and the Regular Army 8%. Furthermore, DoD issued a new retention policy for non-deployable Service members on February 14, 2018. Under this policy, Service members, other than pregnant and post-partum Service members, who have been in a non-deployable status for 12 consecutive months will be processed for administrative or disability separation. Under the DoD policy, the Military Services have until October 1, 2018 to begin mandatory processing of non-deployable Service members for administrative or disability separation. The Army will make continued reductions to our non-deployable population a priority.

The Army continues to reduce the time required for Soldiers to process through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). Current processing times for the Reserve Components are down to 285 days and the Active Component is down to 236 days. Processing times were impacted during FY17 due to Information Technology (IT) migration activities involving our separate Medical Evaluation Board and Physical Evaluation Board case processing applications into a single disability case processing application for both stakeholders. Active Component IDES processing times have decreased by 14 days on average since October 2017 as our IT migration nears completion, and we will continue to strive towards achieving our informal Army goal of 210 days versus the DoD published goal of 295 days. The IDES population is steady state at approximately 12K. We will continue to evaluate how to efficiently and fairly evaluate injured Soldiers and either return them to duty or assist them in transitioning to civilian life.

In addition to taking care of Soldiers and their Families while they are in the Army, we are committed to ensuring their successful transition. We know that every year approximately 100K Soldiers transition from the Total Army via either retirement or separation. Our mandate here is clear -- we must continue to focus on preparing our Soldiers for transition to productive Veterans across our respective communities.

The Army's Soldier for Life program conducts strategic outreach and shapes education, employment, and health policies, programs and services to inspire citizens to serve and to create an environment where Soldiers transition to be productive Veterans of character, integrity, and service. The program has connected more than one thousand private and public organizations to transitioning Soldiers and spouses, resulting in increased educational and employment opportunities for Army Veterans and Family Members. Further, according to the Department of Labor, Soldier for Life efforts assisted in reducing the Veteran unemployment rates 3.7% for FY17, with the lowest amount of unemployment compensation for Veterans in 17 years.

For FY17, the Army's Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act compliance was over 88% -- the AC at 90%, ARNG at 86% and USAR at 79%. We as an Army continue to enhance our policies and procedures for transitioning Soldiers and have ensured Commanders understand that they must ensure their Soldiers attend VOW Act-mandated briefings. In the end, it is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure Soldiers transition successfully back into our communities better enabling them to become productive citizens as well as important ambassadors for the Army who can positively affect the propensity for others to serve.

To build a Total Army of professional Active, Reserve and National Guard forces, as well as Civilians, who are trained and ready to take on the challenges of the future, we must leverage and manage all available talent and ensure every individual is optimized to fight and win our nation's wars. The Army is piloting a Talent Assessment Program that will identify our talent and match them to Army requirements. For example, this past summer at the Aviation Captain's Career Course at Ft. Rucker,

Alabama, junior captains completed a battery of talent assessment instruments, which collectively provide them with individually-tailored feedback on where their talents align with the requirements of the Army's various career specialties. Likewise, junior captains at the Field Artillery Captain's Career Course are conducting a similar talent assessment now. The pilot program finishes this spring, and we plan to expand the assessment program to include additional career courses over the next two years.

Our goal is comprehensive visibility of all our Soldiers' knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors to best fit the right person in the right job at the right time. The Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) will transform the Army's legacy personnel system to a 21st century Talent Management system. To accomplish this, we must move from a personnel management system to a talent management system that will enable us to better manage Soldier talents and match them to Army requirements.

For the first time ever, IPPS-A will enable the Army to manage all 1.1 million Total Force Soldiers in a single, integrated personnel and pay system that will directly impact the readiness of the Total Force and improve the lives of our Soldiers. Finally, it will provide a full end to end audit capability to ensure Army personnel and pay transactions are compliant with the law. IPPS-A integrates software that creates distinct roles and permissions by individual positions, sets business processes, segregates duties, and generates system alerts when changes are made - we cannot do this with our current systems. IPPS-A enables the Army to modernize and transform our Human Resource processes and helps us to facilitate significant business process reengineering. The initial implementation of IPPS-A will start with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in October 2018.

The Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 is a web-based information system that will further facilitate the Army's Talent Management efforts. This system promotes transparency of requirements for Soldiers and units; enables stakeholder interaction via

an intuitive marketplace; captures unique Soldier talents, unit and position data; and establishes a talent management link to IPPS-A.

The Army is people. The men and women who serve our Nation, both in uniform and out of uniform, along with their families, are our most important asset. As a Nation, we must ensure they have the required resources so they are ready when called upon to fight and win our Nation's wars. I thank all of you for your continued support of our All-Volunteer Army.

Lieutenant General Thomas C. Seamands
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1
United States Army

Lieutenant General Thomas C. Seamands is the product of an Army Family. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from the University of Dayton and was commissioned through the ROTC program into the Adjutant General's Corps. He is a graduate of the AG Officer Basic Course, AG Officer Advanced Course, and the Army Command and General Staff College. He attained a Master of Science Degree in Management from Webster University, was the Army's Leadership and Management Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and a Fellow at MIT's Seminar XXI: Foreign Politics, International Relations and the National Interest. Lieutenant General Seamands assumed his current assignment as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army, Washington, DC in May 2017.

Lieutenant General Seamands' most recent assignment was as the Commanding General, United States Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky. His previous assignments include: S-1, 649th Engineer Battalion, Germany; Executive Officer, HHC, 1st PERSCOM, Germany; Chief, Personnel Administrative Service Affairs Division, later Chief, Enlisted Strength Management Division, 82d Adjutant General Company, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Commander, 82d Replacement Detachment, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Chief, Officer Strength Management Division, 82d Adjutant General Company, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Chief, Personnel Actions, later Executive Officer, 556th Personnel Services Company, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Deputy G-1, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, North Carolina; Chief, Enlisted Distribution Division, United States Army Pacific, Hawaii; Chief, Combat Service Support Team and Continental United States Distribution Team, United States Army Personnel Command, Alexandria, Virginia; Executive Officer, 82d Personnel Services Battalion, later Executive Officer, 82d Soldier Support Battalion, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Deputy Commander, 18th Personnel Group (Airborne) and 18th Soldier Support Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Commander, 556th Personnel Services Battalion, later Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Assistant Chief of Staff, CJ-1, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq; Chief, General Officer Management Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army, Pentagon; Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army Forces Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Director of Personnel Management, Army G-1, Washington, DC.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (Two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Legion of Merit (One Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (One Silver Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (One Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Army Staff Identification Badge.

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT P. BURKE, U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
AND
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, TRAINING & EDUCATION)
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
PERSONNEL POSTURE OF THE ARMED SERVICES**

MARCH 21, 2018

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the personnel posture of the United States Navy and our manpower, personnel, training, education (MPT&E), and family support programs.

READY AND CAPABLE GLOBAL NAVY

For over 240 years, the U.S. Navy has been a cornerstone of American security and prosperity. In an increasingly globalized world, America's success is ever more dependent on the U.S. Navy. As Chief of Naval Personnel, I am responsible for manning our ships, squadrons, submarines, and stations with Sailors ready to undertake the challenging jobs and tasks demanded of them. This entails recruiting talented individuals and providing efficient and effective training pipelines that transform Sailors into highly-skilled maritime warriors – the best in the world! My team manages the single resource that cuts across every warfare specialty, platform and organization in the Navy - our most prized treasure - our Sailors. As we stand on the horizon of a new Fleet with new operating concepts, we must also seek out people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, critical thinking skills and the mental agility to operate across the spectrum of change that lies ahead. This requires a personnel system that is equally agile and flexible, ready to meet the challenges and uncertainty of a great power era.

COMPETING FOR TALENT

While recruiting and retention are generally healthy, it is clear that competition for talent is steadily increasing. Propensity to serve has declined among young people possessing the requisite academic and physical aptitude necessary for service. The improving economy is beginning to impact recruiting and retention. We are in strong competition with the civilian sector and the other military services for the same talent pool. As our Navy grows in the years ahead, our need for additional highly talented people will increase, even as we enhance our ability to retain our current talent base and reestablish required Fleet wholeness.

It has been more than a decade since we experienced widespread challenges in the recruiting and retention markets. In the period since, the civilian unemployment rate has become a less accurate predictor of retention and recruiting behavior. The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) recently concluded a study on the impact of various economic metrics on retention, and created a useful economic index, which is more indicative of overall economic health, relying more heavily on factors beyond unemployment, and more closely matching historical retention and recruiting behavior. Comprised of different economic variables and monthly economic forecasts, we consider it a reliable leading indicator.

Current forecasts suggest difficult times ahead. Several MPT&E metrics, which normally serve as the bellwether for change in Navy workforce behavior, are consistent with an improving economy, and demonstrate that the competition has indeed begun. Forecasts predict regional labor shortages in working age population in some states and skill-sets, e.g., computers, mathematics, and healthcare. Technically-skilled labor is at high risk for both shortages and

accelerated wage growth, based on a large number of anticipated retirements and few new workforce entrants. These labor market factors may pull Sailors in certain critical skill-sets away from the Navy and into the civilian job market. We must heed these market indicators and take preemptive action to retain key labor skills as challenges increase in the coming years. We are using these predictive analytics to apply modest increases in enlistment and retention bonuses ahead of need, rather than wait for the large reactionary swings of the past.

End Strength

Navy end strength and budget growth, in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and FY2019, will further efforts begun in FY2017 to restore Fleet wholeness, while beginning force growth. Following three consecutive years of declining end strength, we will achieve growth through a balanced approach of maximizing retention, increasing accessions, and ensuring the right Sailor, with the right skills and experience, is in the right place to meet mission requirements (a metric we call “fit”). To position us for success in implementing anticipated force structure growth, we recently initiated a number of important policy changes. We have effectively eliminated voluntary Enlisted Early Transition Program (“early-outs”) and incentivized early return to sea duty for career Sailors, to narrow gaps at sea and retain Sailors through completion of their service commitments. Despite aggressive use of all policy levers throughout FY2017, we only just met our end strength requirement, a challenge caused largely by a cut in accessions we had to take in FY2016 due to Military Personnel, Navy (MPN) funding limitations associated with Budget Control Act top line requirements. While overall strength is near programmed levels, the funded levels at the end of FY2017 left over 7,500 gapped sea duty billets because new accessions primarily fill sea duty billets. We also face significant challenges in meeting the demand for specific technical skills in our Nuclear, Cyber, and Special Operations programs, certain type/model/series aviation platforms, and in the Healthcare Professions.

The President’s Budget for FY2019 supports growth in accounts for Fleet manpower, student and training, special and incentive pays, and Transients, Patients, Prisoners, and Holdees (TPPH), furthering Navy’s commitment to fully fund Total Ownership Costs for people. Funding Total Ownership Costs ensures adequate lead-time for Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves, student training and special and incentive pays. This is critical to maintain good faith with our Sailors to increase retention and better position us to properly man the growing future Fleet.

Recruiting

Recruiting risk was moderate in FY2017, although recruiters were already experiencing challenges in meeting mission goals in an improving labor market, with decreasing propensity of qualified youth to serve in the military, constrained marketing and advertising budgets, and security clearance delays. We continue to closely monitor the labor market and other leading indicators, appropriately adjusting risk mitigation strategies to accomplish the mission.

Meeting an increased FY2018 recruiting mission will be even more challenging as market conditions continue to improve. We have begun to position ourselves to address these challenges by restoring 226 Fleet Recruiters and Career Recruiting Force billets across the

Future Years Defense Program (FYDP), and re-phasing the end strength growth-profile to reduce risk and stress on the supply chain.

Since 2015, overall recruit quality has declined slightly, as indicated by a decrease in the number of new-contract applicants scoring above 50 percent on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). The number scoring at least 65 percent, necessary to fill special programs such as Naval Special Warfare/Operations (NSW/NSO), is also in decline. During 2017, we missed new contract goal for NSW/NSO for the month of September, and for the year. Nuclear Field shipping-goal also presents unique challenges to the recruiting force. The requirement and necessity for a fully-adjudicated security clearance imposes delays in shipping future Sailors from the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) to Recruit Training Command (RTC).

We continue to see strong interest in commissioning opportunities through both the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program, as the number of highly qualified applicants vastly exceeds the number of available appointments. Officer accession sources continue to attract the finest applicants and graduate well-rounded, technically competent leaders for commissioned naval service.

Enlisted Retention

For FY2018 and FY2019, production of new Sailors will be largely limited by first term Sailor training capacity, making retention of every capable Sailor critical to operational readiness as the Navy grows. We continue to maximize retention behavior by focusing on retaining proven performers in the right mix of ratings and pay grades through targeted use of enlisted retention incentives to position us to meet current and future mission requirements. In light of growth anticipated in the coming years, we expect most ratings will find it difficult to continue achieving required retention. While aggregate enlisted retention remains high, Nuclear Field, Special Warfare, Advanced Electronics, Aviation Maintenance and Information Technologies retention require focused efforts.

Previously-mentioned changes in force management policies to retain Sailors through completion of their current obligations include adjusting High Year Tenure (HYT) gates for Sailors in pay grades E3-E6, discontinuing the Enlisted Early Transition Program, revising our Physical Fitness Assessment separation policy, and reducing Recruit Training Command (RTC) attrition. We also expanded reenlistment and rating conversion opportunities. Special and incentive pays continue to play a vital role in retaining Sailors in high-demand and/or high-investment skills under the greatest stress. Monetary incentives will continue to be an integral part of our retention strategy as we proactively address force structure challenges to meet operational requirements. As part of Sailor 2025, we will also pilot use of a merit component to enlisted retention bonuses.

Officer Retention

Competition is increasing to recruit America's top talent into our officer corps, train them with cutting-edge technology and techniques, and retain their expertise to preserve our competitive advantage in the maritime security environment. Generally, officer retention is

sufficient to meet most community-milestone requirements. However, we continue to face challenges within some historically retention-challenged communities, particularly among aviators in specific model/type/series platforms, nuclear-trained Surface Warfare officers, Submarine officers, and within Naval Special Warfare, specifically among Navy SEALs.

Active Component aviation concerns are primarily among the Strike Fighter (VFA), Electronic Attack (VAQ), and Helicopter Mine Countermeasure (HM) communities – each did not retain sufficient numbers of O-4 pilots to meet all operational department head requirements in our aviation squadrons. Similarly, the Reserve Component is struggling to retain aviators in in these same communities, as well as among Maritime Patrol (VP) and Fleet Logistics (VR) squadrons.

While Aviation Incentive Pay (AvIP) and Aviation Bonus (AvB) are the primary, and most-effective, monetary incentives for addressing aviator retention shortfalls, as with other communities, Navy is applying a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives focused on meeting aviator career expectations and quality of life/service. Increases in statutory caps for both pays, enacted in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), were well received and appreciated by naval aviators. The Aviation Department Head Retention Bonus (ADHRB) offered to aviators in pay grades O-3 and O-4 targets communities with the greatest retention challenges, including VFA, VAQ and HM. Aviation Command Retention Bonus (ACRB) incentivizes officers in pay grade O-5, particularly those needed to fill post-command commander assignments.

Submarine and Surface Warfare (Nuclear) Communities are working to retain their best talent by combining monetary and non-monetary incentives. Monetary incentives include retention bonuses for officers willing to commit early to future service, and special duty pays for challenging nuclear billets.

We restructured Naval Special Warfare Officer Bonus Programs to increase bonus take rates. We now offer two SEAL officer retention bonuses at critical career decision points: Naval Special Warfare Officer Continuation Pay (NSWOCP) to paygrades O-3 and O-4, and Naval Special Warfare Officer Retention Bonus (NSWRB) to pay grades O-4 and O-5.

Historically, targeted bonuses have proven most effective and cost-efficient in addressing retention problems in specific communities, jobs, and experience levels to retain high-quality personnel to meet operational requirements. Additionally, recently-implemented adjustments to add performance components to Surface Warfare Officer bonuses were very effective – we are moving to make similar adjustments to aviation officer bonus programs. We are complimenting monetary incentives with non-monetary initiatives, to include open communication and transparency in officer detailing, mentorship, and Fleet feedback mechanisms to optimize retention policy changes.

SAILOR 2025

To attract and retain the very best Sailors in an increasingly competitive talent market will require continued flexibility and transparency in our policies and practices. Sailor 2025 is a

dynamic set of over 45 initiatives designed to help us do just that. It is a roadmap designed to improve personnel programs by providing Sailors with choice and flexibility.

Sailor 2025 is modernizing personnel management and training policies and systems to identify, recruit, and train, talented people more effectively, and manage the force of tomorrow while improving warfighting readiness. The modern, innovative, information technology (IT) infrastructure we are building will help improve the way we recruit, train and retain talent, more accurately and efficiently assign talent across the force, better design and account for compensation packages, and generate a system that affords greater flexibility and permeability. Sailor 2025 is built on a framework of three pillars:

- A modern personnel system,
- A career learning continuum with modernized delivery methods, called Ready, Relevant Learning (RRL), and
- Shaping resilient, tough, Sailors bolstered by a family support network that fosters a career of service.

Personnel System Modernization

The first pillar is a wholesale modernization of our entire personnel system. We are creating flexible policies and additional career choices, and empowering commanding officers with tools to retain the best and brightest Sailors. We have already implemented programs, including the Meritorious Advancement Program, increased credentialing and graduate education opportunities, and Tours with Industry. We are also working to expand “Marketplace Detailing” pilot initiatives, overhaul the performance evaluation system, modernize delivery and tailoring of advancement examinations coincident with a rating modernization effort, and achieve greater permeability between the Active and Reserve Components.

Ready Relevant Learning

The second pillar “Ready, Relevant Learning” (RRL), is a holistic approach to training our career enlisted force, which will accelerate the learning of every Sailor for faster response to rapidly changing warfighting requirements in increasingly dynamic operational environments. Today’s legacy training does not take full advantage of existing and emerging technology for knowledge-transfer. Oftentimes, the skills acquired during accession pipeline training atrophy due to delays between receipt of training and on-the-job performance, increasing the burden on the Fleet and potentially compromising operational readiness. We are using the science-of-learning to transform the current training model to identify modern training solutions delivered at the point of need, better preparing Sailors to operate and maintain equipment at its technological limits, and meet rapidly evolving warfighting requirements. It will require sustained focus across three lines of effort: (1) career-long learning continuum, (2) modern delivery at the point of need, and (3) integrated content development.

We are currently in the first stage of this career-long learning continuum line of effort, known as Block Learning, which divides existing accession level training content into smaller blocks, which are moved to real-world points of need in the Sailor’s career, shortening initial

accession training time and making Sailors available to the Fleet sooner. Block Learning uses existing training content while we reengineer the training to meet objectives of the future RRL training continuum. To date, we have completed Block Learning analysis for 54 rating paths, approved changes for 25 ratings, with nine now delivering training in this new continuum.

The second line of effort of RRL will provide modern delivery of training by taking advantage of emerging learning technologies to allow Sailors to more efficiently receive training at the point of need – at the waterfront, or aboard the operational unit. These training solutions will apply science-of-learning principles to make training more effective, efficient and available by leveraging technology, thereby, minimizing the necessity of repeatedly returning to a brick-and-mortar schoolhouse. Over the last year, we initiated requirements-development for modernization of 29 ratings, and began identifying and aligning IT capabilities to support delivery of modernized content, ashore and afloat. Requirements-development is critical to the third line of effort of RRL, integrated content development. Here, Fleet leadership defines training requirements and aligns training content and delivery methods with Fleet needs.

Career Readiness

The third pillar, Career Readiness, seeks to remove barriers to continued service and improve Sailors' work-life balance, health, and wellness. Our goal is to enhance Sailors' career readiness by better developing leaders, and removing obstacles that negatively influence a Sailor's decision to stay Navy. The Navy is more powerful and lethal when we leverage and capitalize on the talents and strengths of the entire military and civilian workforce, and instilling an environment in which everyone feels valued and respected, which is a force multiplier. Toward that end, we have incorporated the One Navy Team concept into leader development efforts to make our force stronger, more resilient, and more competitive with the best public and private sector employers, equipped and ready to deter war and protect the security of our nation.

MANPOWER PERSONNEL TRAINING & EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

Recruiting, training, and managing Sailors in today's demanding operational environment using historical, industrial age, assembly line techniques of the past, is costly and unsustainable. To effectively combat current and emerging threats, maintain maritime superiority, and continue competitively recruiting and retaining America's top talent, we must move-out now with purpose and a committed sense of urgency to transform and modernize the MPT&E Enterprise.

Our efforts will greatly improve Fleet readiness, integrate pay and personnel systems, fix auditability issues, and improve service delivery through a holistic, end-to-end, transformation that will directly, positively, affect the entire Navy "Hire-to-Retire" lifecycle. Following industry best practices, we implemented a new operating model, restructuring the Enterprise around three fundamental lines of business:

- Force Development - the recruiting, on-boarding, and training of new Sailors,
- Force Management - the management of our force from first command to retirement or separation, and

- Enterprise Services - ensuring that Force Development and Force Management have the tools and resources to meet mission objectives efficiently and effectively.

We are establishing the *MyNavy* Career Center, a multi-channel centralized customer service solution that will enable Sailor self-service, streamline Human Resource operations, and provide 24/7 call center support. Three *MyNavy* Career Centers will consolidate the workload of over 60 geographically dispersed Personnel Support Detachments with better standardization, improved auditability, and significantly improved customer service. In early 2017, we fielded the first incremental release of *MyNavy Portal*, which continues to evolve rapidly with each new planned release, bringing additional functionality and integration to the system. Development of the integrated Navy Pay and Personnel (NP2) system is underway, with an early prototyping field test at Naval Station, Great Lakes, in progress since late 2017. In 2018, we will begin early testing of *MyNavy* Career Center functionality, and commencing a second, larger scale, test of NP2, which will build-out and test Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) initial operating capability (IOC) elements.

Combined with Sailor 2025 and Ready, Relevant Learning, MPT&E Transformation will open the door to new ways of managing the force, with improved transparency, connectivity, and customer service. Fleet leaders will see faster action, and more-accurate data on personnel and training needs. Ultimately, Navy will benefit from a more agile, adaptive, and better trained force, ready to meet an increasingly complex mission.

OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT REFORM

In conjunction with our Sailor 2025 effort to modernize personnel management programs and training systems, we are reviewing officer management statutes and policy to provide our officers with similar tools and flexibility to those we have already provided to enlisted Sailors. We have achieved a solid start within existing authorities. However, achieving the point-of-service support expected by our officers, and the standard of agility and responsiveness needed by Fleet commanders, requires a more flexible set of officer management tools. We can accomplish this through relatively modest adjustments to the current officer personnel management framework, while maintaining core Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) attributes. We are grateful for your interest in this area, and your partnership, as we work to modernize DOPMA to meet the future needs of all of the Services.

TAKING CARE OF SAILORS AND NAVY FAMILIES

Family Framework/Support Programs

In October 2017, the Chief of Naval Operations published the Navy Family Framework to reinforce the importance of the role families play in mission success and to outline five organizational goals for enhancing mutual support between the Navy and our families:

- Improve Navy family support programs,
- Better connect with, and inform, Navy families,
- Improve spouse training and expand our education network,

- Increase meaningful command leader engagement with Navy spouses and families, and
- Reinforce Navy families' connection to the Navy and its core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

Family Support programs are critical to enhancing mission readiness and assisting commanding officers, Sailors and their families in managing the unique demands of the military lifestyle, balancing military commitment with family life.

Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers ensure military families are informed, healthy, and resilient through robust programs to include, relocation assistance, non-medical and family counseling, personal and family life education, personal financial management services, information and referral services, deployment assistance, domestic violence prevention and response services, exceptional family member liaison, emergency family assistance and transition assistance.

Navy child and youth programs provide quality childcare. Navy morale, welfare, and recreation programs provide core fitness and recreation for Sailors and families to enhance quality of life and encourage life-long positive and healthy leisure pursuits. As part of Sailor 2025, we extended hours of operation at fitness centers and child development centers in response to the demand signal from Sailors and their families, which positively influences decisions to remain in the Navy and improves our ability to meet Fleet readiness requirements.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide remains the second leading cause of death in the Navy and prevention remains among our highest priorities. We experienced a 27 percent increase in deaths due to suicide last year, a rate of 20.2 deaths per 100,000, greatly exceeding the 2016 rate of 15.9, as well as the previous high rate of 18.1, in 2012.

There is no single cause, and no single solution, to this complex problem. We are tackling each major contributing factor at both the individual and community level, studying each death in detail. Individual factors continue to be relationship problems, legal problems, career and academic setbacks, and mental health problems. Sailors who have died by suicide felt a loss of belonging and connectedness; felt ostracized and alone; and lacked adequate coping and problem solving skills, and emotional regulation. Fleet training efforts have revealed that increasingly Sailors are responding appropriately when shipmates require help. We continue to focus on initiatives to enhance our ability to reduce suicide within our ranks:

- Our six Operational Stress Control Mobile Training Teams provide resilience and toughness skills for Sailors and their families, and tools to remain psychologically healthy.
- Embedded mental health providers within units, including all large deck ships and expeditionary units, improve access to care, remove barriers to seeking care, and embody a culture of help-seeking behavior.
- Waterfront clinics are under development in Fleet concentration areas and civilian resiliency counselors are deployed to assist in managing non-medical problems that affect Sailors.

- Reserve Psychological Health Outreach Program ensures that Reserve Component Sailors have full access to appropriate psychological health care services.
- The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) Program, implemented last year, provides rapid assistance and ongoing risk assessment and support for Sailors in the 90-day period following a suicide-related behavior. SAIL supplements medical care with non-clinical resources that address other life problems confronting the Sailor.
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office collaboration to implement skills training at accession points and throughout Sailors' careers and provide a strong foundation for follow-on training.

Suicide prevention coordinators partner with command leaders to enhance the sense of community and ensure everyone feels valued and a part of the mission. The most recent version of the command climate survey assesses the extent to which Sailors feel they belong, and gives leaders more insight into problem areas within the command. Our 21st Century Sailor Office reaches out to the commanding officer of each command that experiences a suicide-related behavior or death by suicide, to guide them to available resources and reassure them of our availability, support, and empathetic ear.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

We are reviewing and evaluating the Navy SAPR prevention strategy, and training content, to ensure we are achieving the desired impact, e.g., knowledge transfer, issue awareness, and intervention skills. We continue to collaborate with academia, and other federal and non-federal organizations, in investigating research-informed and evidence-based prevention strategies aimed at reducing, and ultimately eliminating, destructive behaviors.

We continue to refine our response capability with investigations into suspected misconduct, and both criminal and administrative accountability for individuals who violate the standards. We treat victims with compassion, and remain committed to providing quality care, conducting thorough investigations in a timely manner, and providing a fair and equitable system of accountability to ensure justice and maintenance of good order and discipline. Through partnerships across the Department of Defense, we continue to execute a strategy to prevent and respond to retaliation by better understanding the prevalence of retaliatory behavior, including reprisal, ostracism, and maltreatment.

Eliminating Destructive Behavior

We are eliminating destructive behavior by determining the most effective approach for prevention and education to reduce adverse social and health-related outcomes. We have engaged a Highly Qualified Expert in the field of behavioral science, to better address complex societal issues that affect Sailors and readiness. We have also applied a metrics-based, data science approach, to provide clearer insight into the nature of incidents resulting from destructive decisions, and to better identify leading indicators, target prevention efforts, and accurately focus action. For example:

- We have initiated primary prevention strategies that focus on a continuum of excellence, facilitating productive behaviors that support a more effective warrior ethos.

- We will evaluate tools for assessing recruits to better understand their needs and how to address them effectively. Leadership is the key to carrying out the national security mission while creating a positive environment for our people.
- We have engaged leaders to evaluate tools and policies that build trust, unit cohesion, and a positive command climate, while developing the most lethal naval force.

This year, we launched *Full Speed Ahead 2.0*, continuing our efforts to prevent and combat destructive behaviors and promote positive Signature Behaviors by emphasizing dedication to personal betterment, development of team dynamics grounded in trust and respect, and reinforcement of Sailors' commitment to Navy values to uphold a culture inclusive and empowering for all.

Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention programs support enhanced Fleet, family, and personal readiness through aggressive prevention of alcohol and drug abuse. Substance abuse places lives and missions at risk, undercuts unit readiness and morale, is often involved in other destructive behaviors, and is inconsistent with Navy's ethos and core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. The *Keep What You've Earned* campaign fosters improved decision making for Sailors to protect their career investment by creating an environment that encourages and teaches methods on responsible consumption of alcohol, offers alternatives, and educates about the consequences of poor decision making. Detection, deterrence, and prevention are key elements in combating drug abuse. Our *Prescription for Discharge* campaign educates Sailors on the proper use of prescription drugs. Expanded urinalysis screening has increased detection of wrongful prescription drug use and yielded a decline in positive synthetic drug results. We are committed to providing Sailors with the support network, health care, and skills, needed to overcome adversity and make responsible decisions.

OUR WAY AHEAD

The Fiscal Year 2019 U.S. Navy 30-year shipbuilding plan released this past month, lays out Navy's overarching plan in support of the National Defense Strategy, referred to as the Navy the Nation Needs (NNN). The six pillars of the NNN – Readiness, Capability, Capacity, Manning, Networks, and Operating Concepts – must remain balanced and scalable in order to field the needed credible naval power, guarding against over-investment in one area that might disadvantage another. This disciplined approach ensures force structure growth accounts for commensurate, properly phased investments across all six pillars – a balanced warfighting investment strategy to fund the total ownership cost of the Navy (manning, support, training, infrastructure, etc.).

Within this context, this shipbuilding plan defines the framework for working together with Congress to attain the 355-ship NNN warfighting requirement called for in the FY2018 NDAA. Among the investments this growth will require are increases in the MPN and Operations and Maintenance accounts, to support and sustain the larger Fleet, which may include an end strength increase approaching 35,000, fully dependent on the associated supporting units and squadrons, and training pipeline growth. Growth in the force structure is funded across the FYDP, to include key enablers such as additional recruiters, Recruit Division Commanders and instructors.

Finally, Navy continues to aggressively work through the combined recommendations of both the Comprehensive Review and the Secretary of the Navy's Strategic Readiness Review, under a consolidated Readiness Reform Oversight Council, for improvements on crew manning, individual training, and career progression, among other things. These lessons are being applied, not only to the Surface Warfare community, but across the Navy.

CONCLUSION

Navy must continue to attract, recruit, develop, assign, and retain a highly skilled workforce. As we continue to battle in this competition for talent, Navy is well postured to support Sailors and their families, and increase their resilience. I look forward to working with you as we continue to shape the Navy to meet current and emerging requirements.

5/27/2016 - Present
Vice Admiral Robert P. Burke

Vice Adm. Robert Burke grew up in Portage, Michigan, and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering from Western Michigan University and the University of Central Florida.

Burke's operational assignments include service aboard both attack and ballistic missile submarines, including USS Von Steuben (SSBN 632), USS Maryland (SSBN 738) and USS Bremerton (SSN 698). He commanded USS Hampton (SSN 767) in Norfolk, Virginia, and was commodore of Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 12 in Groton, Connecticut. Burke was recognized by the United States Submarine League with the Jack Darby Award for Leadership in 2004 and the Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Award for Inspirational Leadership in 2005.

His staff assignments include tours as an instructor and director for the Electrical Engineering Division at Naval Nuclear Power School, junior board member on the Pacific Fleet Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board, submarine officer community manager/nuclear officer program manager; senior Tactical Readiness Evaluation Team member at Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; the deputy director for Operations, Strategy and Policy Directorate (J5) at United States Joint Forces Command; the division director, Submarine/Nuclear Power Distribution (PERS-42); and director, Joint and Fleet Operations, N3/N5, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

As a flag officer, Burke has served as deputy commander, U.S. 6th Fleet; director of operations (N3), U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa; commander, Submarine Group 8; and most recently as director, Military Personnel Plans and Policy (OPNAV N13).

He assumed duties as the Navy's 58th chief of naval personnel, May 27, 2016. Serving concurrently as the deputy chief of naval operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) (N1), he is responsible for the planning and programming of all manpower, personnel, training and education resources for the U.S. Navy. He leads more than 26,000 employees engaged in the recruiting, personnel management, training and development of Navy personnel. His responsibilities include overseeing Navy Recruiting Command, Navy Personnel Command and Naval Education and Training Command.

His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (five awards) and various campaign and unit awards.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: FY19 AIR FORCE PERSONNEL POSTURE STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF:

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GINA M. GROSSO
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF MANPOWER, PERSONNEL
AND SERVICES, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

MARCH 21, 2018

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to talk about our Airmen. America's Airmen remain "Always There" providing Global Vigilance, Reach and Power to protect and defend our Nation. Our Airmen, Active, Guard, Reserve and civilian, have been engaged globally for the longest continuous stretch of combat in our Nation's history. As noted in the National Defense Strategy, we are facing a complex and volatile global environment with increasing disorder resulting from the decline of the long-standing rules-based international order under which we previously operated. Great power competition has reemerged as the central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security. In this environment, we must prioritize and resource what is most important to field a lethal, expertly trained, resilient, and innovative Air Force to meet today's and tomorrow's warfighting demands.

ACCELERATING READINESS

Our Airmen, both military and civilian, are our most important asset. Increasing end strength, as requested in the FY19 President's Budget, will allow the Air Force to better meet today's warfighting demands as well tomorrow's. Without continued end strength growth, readiness will decline and the Air Force will find it increasingly difficult to meet evolving Combatant Commander requirements.

End Strength

The Air Force appreciates the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act's support for continued end strength growth to 675,300 Total Force Airmen, and we are meeting our projections to reach the desired state for end strength growth.

Our FY19 budget request builds on the progress we have been making in 2018 to restore the readiness of the force, increase lethality, and cost-effectively modernize by continuing our growth to 680,400 Total Force Airmen – 329,100 Active Duty, 107,100 Air National Guard, 70,000 Air Force Reserve, and 174,200 Civilians. The growth will accelerate our readiness and provide more lethal Airmen to protect and defend our Nation. Our budget prioritizes long-term competition with China and Russia in alignment with the National Defense Strategy and moves the Air Force in the direction of multi-domain operations.

The Total Force military growth between FY18 and FY19 is 4,700. The 4,700 end strength growth includes 4,000 Active Duty, 500 Air National Guard, and 200 Air Force Reserve. The Active Duty growth, as represented in the FY19 accession plan, consists of 1,600 for aircraft maintenance; 1,160 for logistics, medical, and support career fields; 400 for rated and pilot production; 270 for operations in space, cyber, and others; 240 for intelligence; 220 for career

enlisted aviators; and 110 for Battlefield Airmen. This growth in end strength is a part of our deliberate strategy to improve the manning in Air Force units.

Similarly, the growth in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve addresses Remotely Piloted Aircraft, pilot production, intelligence, and cyber with the focus on improving squadron manning.

In short, this investment strategy increases pilot production, adds operations and maintenance manpower to Remotely Piloted Aircraft and continues our manpower investment in cyber and intelligence. Additionally, the growth provides the inventory the Air Force needs to right-size our trainee pipeline; improves squadron health and readiness; and gives us the competitive advantage for Air, Space and Cyber superiority.

Recruiting and Accessing

Readiness is first and foremost about the Airmen who make up your Air Force. Today only 29% of 17 - 24 year old men and women in the United States are eligible to serve—our prime recruiting pool. Despite this low ratio, the Air Force achieved its FY17 enlisted Active (31,000), Air National Guard (10,570) and Reserve component (6,583) recruiting goals.

The FY18 Air Force Active Duty enlisted recruiting goal is 29,450. Thus far, we have met 33% of the overall goal and have identified recruits with projected dates for basic military training at 55% of the goal. The FY18 Air Force Reserve enlisted recruiting goal is 7,240 with 31.6% already met. The FY18 Air National Guard enlisted recruiting goal is 11,497 with 33.9% met as of February 28, 2018. In summary, Active Duty, Reserve and Air National Guard are on track to meet FY18 enlisted recruiting goals.

The FY19 President's Budget Active Duty enlisted recruiting target is 28,250. The FY19 Air Force Reserve enlisted recruiting target is 7,497 and the FY19 Air National Guard enlisted recruiting target is still being worked.

In FY19 the Active Duty officer recruiting target is 5,450, a 350 increase from FY18. The FY19 Air Force Reserve's goal is 1,253, an increase of 43, and the Air National Guard's is 1,480, an increase of 502

The FY19 President's Budget increases Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship funding by \$18.1M to allow the Air Force to offer 1,000 additional scholarships. We are confident we can meet our FY18 and FY19 officer recruiting targets.

The FY19 President's Budget also increases training capacity to "right-size" the student pipeline with a focus on critical skills production as identified in the National Defense Strategy. These

increases address foundational disconnects in the training pipeline, fund instructors to boost pipeline capacity, increase Remotely Piloted Aircraft operations support and cyber mission capability. Specifically, we are adding 248 authorizations to assist in pipeline technical training in addition to adding 74 authorizations to increase Military Training Instructors and Military Training Leaders at Basic Military Training.

To further assist with overall pilot shortages, we are actively seeking retired pilots to return to active duty. To date, 15 applications are in the review process and 4 have been approved. Though not large numbers, these returning pilots will mitigate manning shortages and augment other programs to help restore our pilot inventory.

We appreciate the authority to award constructive credit to recruit for the Cyber career fields. In our pilot program, we have two candidates selected from our highly skilled Cyber Warfare enlisted force who have obtained Cyber master's degrees. Our initial approach to recruit from within the Air Force is to expedite the assimilation of these candidates into the Cyber Warfare officer corps as their career training and experience waives the lengthy Undergraduate Cyber Training requirement. Further, these candidates have exemplary military records and the highest recommendations from their leadership. We will continue to monitor these initial candidates as they begin Officer Training School on March 28, 2018.

Retaining Airmen and Families

While the Air Force is experiencing historically high retention rates in both the officer and enlisted corps, we do have pockets of retention challenges. For our enlisted career fields, we have lower retention for linguistic analysts, special operations aircraft maintenance, and nuclear medicine specialties. For officer career fields, retention is challenged for pilots, combat systems officers, and various medical specialties.

We appreciate Congress' generous support of special and incentive pays. The FY19 President's Budget includes \$1.2 billion for special and incentive pays allowing the Air Force to target critical skill shortages. Further it assists in compensating Airmen for hazardous duty or skill sets that are critical to our warfighting excellence. To ensure we are making the best use of our aviation bonus authorities, we will continue to use a business case model to target payments based on four main criteria: manning levels, retention, cost to train and the length of time to train.

The total force pilot shortage for fiscal year 2017 ended at 1,812 and was most acute in our fighter pilot inventory. This budget continues to address the pilot shortage by continuing the aviator bonus and allowing the Air Force flexibility to focus those resources to address our greatest needs. In addition, this budget adds required training production capacity in our formal

training units to assist in rapidly producing new accessions to fill our cockpits. Finally, this budget permits implementation of myriad programs and policies designed to address assignment, promotion, operational tempo, and quality of life issues targeted to improve retention.

That said, monetary incentives are just one small piece of our retention portfolio. The majority of the retention portfolio are in fact non-monetary. Commanders have the authority to approve high year of tenure extensions for personnel in undermanned key career fields to retain much needed experience. We are adding flexibility into the assignment process for aviators by leveraging technology to improve our assignment matching system. After researching industry best practices, we implemented an information technology solution known as “Talent Marketplace.” Talent Marketplace uses an algorithm, based on the Nobel-Prize winning National Medical Residency Matching Program, to assist in matching officers to available assignments. This algorithm takes into account 1) the officer’s assignment preferences and 2) the hiring manager’s ranking of officers being considered, and produces a match. While Talent Marketplace provides an automated “scientific” match at the beginning of the process, it then assists the Air Force Personnel Center assignment teams in applying the “art” to finalize the process. This two-pronged process approach of “science” and “art” assists with transparency in the assignment process and will enable better managing talent. A demonstration of the Talent Marketplace concept was first tested with our Operations Researchers Analyst career field in the spring of 2017, with successful results. Incremental implementation is underway with Fighter Pilots and Combat System Operators for the summer 2018 assignment cycle. As funding allows, we will bring all officer and enlisted skill sets into the Talent Marketplace program.

Our Career Intermission Program permits Airmen to transfer from active status to the Individual Ready Reserve for one to three years to pursue personal or professional goals. Since program implementation in CY14, there has been a total of 86 participants — 37 officers, 49 enlisted — and 30 have returned to an active status. We currently have 56 personnel on intermission. The Career Intermission Program has enabled the Air Force to retain Airmen that may have otherwise permanently separated due to a personal need or professional goal which they could not attain through other means. To further refine retention efforts, we will evaluate the active duty service commitment currently associated with this program. We advocate making this beneficial program a permanent provision in law.

Having a lethal, agile and flexible force, capable of winning in any environment, goes beyond solely the overall size of the force. It also encompasses looking after Airmen’s mental and physical wellbeing and ensuring we take care of their families so they can focus on the mission. Airmen must be able to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands. Our Airmen must be resilient to be fully mission-ready and lethal. The FY19 President’s Budget increases support to Airmen and families through a variety of capabilities that drive mission readiness and improve the resilience and retention of our human weapon system.

Child and Youth Programs

Airmen cannot be effective if they are worried about their children. In FY19 we increased Child and Youth funding by \$53.6M for a total of \$114.2M. This funding will (1) expand child care for those needing childcare outside of normal duty hours, (2) provide fees to support 4,000 children who must use off-base child care, and (3) fund youth resiliency camps. The funding increase also includes 119 additional civilian child care positions across the Air Force; supplies, closed circuit television repair and replacement, and national youth partnerships such as Boys and Girls Clubs and 4-H.

Exceptional Family Member Programs

More than 33,000 Total Force Airmen have special needs families currently enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program and retention of these skilled Airmen is critical to readiness. To assist in the retention efforts, we are improving support to Exceptional Family Member Program families by increasing installation-level family support coordinators from 84 to 99, providing additional coordinator training, improving assignment management processing, and offering online information for Airmen and their spouses to assist in planning for future assignments. We are also increasing Exceptional Family Member Program Respite Child Care from 12 to 40 hours per child each month. These efforts, along with increased communication with our Exceptional Family Member Program families through quarterly webcasts, accelerate the readiness and lethality of the Air Force.

Recharge for Resiliency

Air Force Morale, Welfare, and Recreation capabilities build skills and self-confidence, reduce stress, and enhance quality of life for Airmen and families. With our Morale, Welfare, and Recreation budget, we will implement new capabilities designed to drive unit cohesion, stability and resiliency in our squadrons. One capability highlight is our Recharge for Resiliency Program which was originally designed to provide Airmen and families an outlet to decompress and adjust after returning home from a deployment. In FY19, we are expanding Recharge for Resiliency to include activities commanders in the field can use specifically to build unit cohesion and drive squadron vitality. One such example is the Team Cohesion Challenge, an adventure race incorporating the four Comprehensive Airman Fitness pillars (mental, physical, social and spiritual) whose focuses on team building.

FOUNDATIONAL READINESS IMPERATIVES

The Air Force's core values--*Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in All We Do*--are the foundation of all Airmen performance.

Wounded Warriors

The Air Force has approximately 3,200 Wounded Warriors serving today. Our commitment to our wounded, ill and injured Airmen remains resolute as these Airmen, their families and caregivers deserve nothing less. As such, the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program provides world-class medical treatment along with physical, psychological, social and family healing through a variety of avenues to include recovery care coordinators that provide care management assistance. Our goal is to return Airmen to duty, whether back to their unit or to another opportunity to serve in uniform. For those who cannot return to duty, we provide personalized transition support from housing and education services, to employment and financial coaching.

Airmen with Invisible Wounds

Airmen with Invisible Wounds – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury or other cognitive, psychological or behavioral disorders – experience unique challenges requiring an agile, comprehensive approach to support and care. The Air Force has approximately 2,300 Airmen with Invisible Wounds. Recognizing these challenges, the Invisible Wounds Initiative began in 2016 with a complete review and revision of medical care and support programs along with a long-term culture change on how we care for Airmen with Invisible Wounds. Since then, we established a specific medical separation review to ensure individuals were diagnosed appropriately and received a thorough course of treatment before meeting a medical review board. We also developed a communication campaign to educate commanders and leaders at all levels on the challenges faced by Airmen with Invisible Wounds with the intent to bring clarity, understanding and open doors for more members to seek help rather than hide mental health issues.

Personal Violence Prevention and Response

Interpersonal violence and suicide are detriments to our Airmen, our culture, and our core values. These acts negatively impact victims, those who perpetrate, and their units. As a result, unit cohesion, mission effectiveness, and ultimately Air Force readiness are threatened. We are deeply committed to the prevention of interpersonal violence and suicide on all fronts from sexual assault, child maltreatment, domestic violence, to workplace violence. Should these events occur despite prevention efforts, we are committed to providing victims the care they need across a robust response system.

Effective prevention is necessary to accelerate readiness. Our prevention strategy involves leveraging cutting edge, evidence based innovations to deliver holistic prevention. We are in the final stages of validating a tool that will screen for individuals with a high propensity for unethical decision-making. It will also assess the risk of individuals engaging in counterproductive behaviors and integrity violations inconsistent with the Air Force culture and Core Values.

At our accessions sources we are adapting the best available interventions from civilian settings to develop tailored and holistic prevention for entry-level Airmen. At Basic Military Training, we are using mobile technology to provide prevention interventions matched to each trainee's unique risk profile. At the Air Force Academy, the Cadet Healthy Personal Skills program is showing tremendous promise in not only working to eradicate sexual assault but also fostering healthy personal and interpersonal skills to build resilience and exceptional leaders.

Across the Total Force, we are moving to the sustainability phase of our evidence-based bystander intervention approach. This integrated bystander approach combines sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and suicide prevention, and reduces these forms of violence. Evaluation results indicate the approach is increasing hope, efficacy, and positive behavior changes. Final results from the 2017 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault will be released this summer; our early analysis shows promising indications of increases in sexual assault reporting. The complete analysis will be available late spring 2018.

We are also implementing Task Force True North, a comprehensive approach to increase help seeking behavior and decrease negative behavior outcomes. This approach embeds mental health providers within at-risk units. Bold initiatives are also underway to prevent suicide, sexual harassment and workplace harassment. These initiatives highlight scientific innovations in prevention, such as computer-based learning for suicide risk detection and intentional climate design to create environments in which workplace harassment is less likely to occur. Time-based prevention, an initiative designed to separate someone who is suicidal from the most lethal means to kill themselves, is also being developed to reduce suicide (i.e. free volunteer storage of personally owned firearms). Taken together, these innovations have the potential to result in substantial decreases in interpersonal violence and suicide.

We are committed to continuous improvement and critical evaluation of our systems. We will partner with external experts from academia, industry, other government agencies and non-profit organizations to improve our ability to support leaders in the field. We remain dedicated to implementing bold ideas that leverage technology and strategic communications to improve leaders' ability to support their Airmen and families.

DEVELOPING EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

The Air Force continues to improve its Force Development processes to ensure alignment with the 2018 National Defense Strategy. Through that lens, we have been working hand-in-hand with our Joint Partners on several leadership development programs.

The deliberate development of Air Force leaders includes education, training and experience. Our enterprise-level development programs focus on improving leadership, management, and

warrior ethos. They are designed to produce Airmen who possess the tactical expertise, operational competence, and strategic vision to lead and execute Air Force and Joint missions, now and in the future. The Air Force executes a senior leader development portfolio emphasizing the continued development of enterprise-level senior leaders (targeted for GS-15s, Senior Executives, Chief Master Sergeants, Colonels, and General Officers). Senior leaders' development is managed by specific officer, enlisted, and civilian management teams and the development portfolio consists of approximately 35 tailored courses and development opportunities annually.

We are examining our Professional Military Education to improve how we develop leaders capable of critical and strategic thought, clear communication, and adept in the art and science of warfighting. We will emphasize intellectual leadership and military professionalism, deepen our knowledge of history, and embrace new technology and techniques to counter competitors.

We need Airmen with the right operational and international skills who can work with partner nations to meet global threats and challenges. The National Defense Strategy highlights the importance of "strengthening allies and attracting new partners." Critical to meeting this line of effort is developing a workforce with the skills to build partnerships, strengthen capabilities and capacities as partner Airmen. In tandem with Department of Defense efforts, we are assessing how we train and develop our Airmen to meet the demands of the increasingly complex Security Cooperation environment. We are working cross-functionally to build a Security Cooperation Workforce that is appropriately trained, certified, resourced, and managed to meet the dynamic, global challenges.

Performance Management

Today's threat environment requires agile, responsive military and civilian personnel management systems to ensure the Air Force continues to retain the highly skilled talent needed to defend the Nation. Cultivating workforce talent is a priority.

Enlisted

In our enlisted force, we are finishing a triennial review of our enlisted evaluation system since transitioning to the new system in 2015. The review centered around answering two strategic questions: 1) "How do we get the very best out of our Airmen so they give their very best to accomplishing the mission?" and 2) "Are there any alternative performance management models that may be used other than Forced Distribution for promotion recommendations?" Initiatives include re-examining what is valued in documenting performance feedback, transforming the current evaluation form to more precisely document performance, developing an evaluation tool that encourages more candid performance feedback, and clarifying stratification rules to reinforce performance feedback. When completed, senior leaders can use the review's recommendations as a baseline to ensure our Enlisted Evaluation System is reinforcing the

development and feedback for our enlisted force. It is also an example of the deliberate and continuous process we use to strengthen the capabilities, readiness, and professionalism of our vital enlisted force.

Officer

Within our officer corps, we are looking into what we can do to enhance the Air Force's ability to execute the right size and mix of capabilities required to meet and sustain emerging mission demands. Currently, we are exploring ways to transform officer performance management using the lessons learned from the transition to the enlisted evaluation system. In 2017, we began an initiative to look at officer performance management, which includes a deliberate review of our officer evaluation system and officer promotion processes. We have a dedicated team exploring various officer evaluation and promotion considerations which include starting at the foundation with thoughtful work focused on what the Air Force values in its officer corps. Building on that sturdy foundation, we are reviewing a number of initiatives to ensure our officer corps is able to meet strategic challenges.

The Department is reviewing proposed statutory changes for the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act to recruit, develop, promote and retain officers for today's operational requirements. Once we have completed our review and obtained approval of our proposed changes not just within the Department, but also by the Administration, we will share these proposals with you and provide you with more details.

Civilian

Our civilian workforce is essential to the Air Force's mission and joint warfighting readiness. Recruiting and hiring top civilian talent is critical to our success. Civilian Airmen represent 25% of our Total Force. The vast majority of our Civilian Airmen, 94%, are at the tip of the spear in our depots and squadrons—not on headquarters staffs as many believe. The Air Force's strategy to improve its civilian hiring process has four lines of effort: (1) Information technology—increasing reliability and automation, (2) Authorities—utilizing current authorities and expanding them as able, (3) Process Improvements and (4) Modest Additional Manpower.

In addition to these lines of effort, the Air Force recognizes the need for a more agile and flexible talent management system responsive to warfighter needs. Air Force Civilian Force Management leaders, partnered with other key stakeholders, have begun developing a concept plan for a pilot civilian talent management system, modeled after a successful demonstration project already in place.

The Air Force has also made strides in civilian workforce recruiting, developing, and retaining talent by launching an accredited Civilian Associate Degree in Leadership and Management Studies program, as well as implementing a Premier College Intern Program. The purpose of the

Associate Degree program is to allow the 50% of Air Force civilians without a college degree to begin their educational journey. The degree enables personal and professional development, improves communication and critical thinking skills, and invests in building a cadre of future Air Force leaders. In FY19, the Premier College Intern Program will enable the Air Force to recruit top talent directly from college campuses via a summer intern program using direct hiring authorities to streamline the process. The intent is to recruit college students who have completed their junior year by giving them summer internships followed by a guaranteed civilian intern developmental position immediately upon graduation. The premier internship program will provide the Air Force with a strategic approach to target specific fields of study, build a campus talent pipeline and introduce the Air Force as an employer of choice. Our target for FY19 is 500—we currently have 415 acceptances. This approach ensures we will leverage the new Congressional hiring authorities and stay competitive with private sector companies like IBM and Google who hire directly from college campuses.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REFORM

The Air Force is modernizing the information technology infrastructure across its human resources systems to provide exceptional service to Total Force Airmen and their families. In a digitally connected world, our Airmen deserve the best Human Resource Systems available today. To improve these systems, our efforts are focused on providing all Airmen a modern cloud-based, mobile-enabled, self-service oriented digital experience. The way forward requires analyzing the Human Resource Management Information Technology portfolio which includes 115 talent management information technology platforms and 400+ applications, to identify business redundancies and opportunities for consolidation. At the foundation of this effort is our transition to cloud services which will enhance Privacy Information security. As we modernize our Information Technology platforms, we will increase our ability to make data-driven decisions.

MyVector

MyVector, is a web-based Total Force development platform and is an example of how we are evolving our Human Resources Information Technology capabilities to enhance support to Airmen in an efficient, agile, and cost effective manner. It underpins the force development for all Airmen and allows them to be actively involved in their own career development process. Presently, more than 176K Total Force Airmen, military and civilians, (15K more than last year) are registered on MyVector and more than 17K Airmen have matched mentoring connections. We are currently posturing the platform to accomplish Officer Developmental Education Boards, Enlisted deliberate development, and foreign language proficiency tracking capabilities.

Air Force Integrated Personnel and Pay System

Another example of modernizing our Information Technology platform is the Air Force Integrated Personnel and Pay System (AFIPPS). This program will enhance our already fully operational personnel system for all three components, Active, Reserve and Guard, by integrating payroll. Our strategy has greatly reduced the life cycle cost estimate of the program from \$1.8B to \$0.7B. It has also dramatically reduced risk by using our existing Oracle Electronic Business Suite platform, established system infrastructure and trained workforce. Contract award will occur early this spring and once completed in January 2021, the Air Force will have a fully integrated personnel and pay system that will meet all federal audit compliances and resolve existing pay issues Airmen experience today.

CONCLUSION

We must ensure our Airmen have the resources, training and tools to *compete, deter, and win* in an ever increasingly complex security environment. Resilient and ready Airmen, both military and civilian, are the foundation of the Air Force's readiness and lethality. Your Air Force will remain "Always There" providing Global Vigilance, Reach and Power to protect and defend our Nation. We are committed to prioritizing and resourcing what is most important and look forward to partnering with Congress in our endeavors to protect and defend our Nation. I thank you for your continuing support of your Air Force.

Lieutenant General Gina M. Grosso

Lt. Gen. Gina M. Grosso is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. General Grosso serves as the senior Air Force officer responsible for comprehensive plans and policies covering all life cycles of military and civilian personnel management, which includes military and civilian end strength management, education and training, compensation, resource allocation, and the worldwide U.S. Air Force services program.

General Grosso entered the Air Force in 1986 as a Reserve Officer Training Corps distinguished graduate from Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has held several command and staff positions throughout her career. As a staff officer, she served as an operations analyst, personnel programs analyst, Air Staff and Office of the Secretary of Defense action officer, Major Command Director of Manpower and Personnel, Director of the Air Force Colonel Management Office, Director, Manpower, Organization and Resources, and Director of Force Management Policy. Her command tours include a Headquarters Squadron Section, Military Personnel Flight, Mission Support Squadron, command of the Air Force's sole Basic Military Training Group, and as Joint Base and 87th Air Base Wing commander at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ. Prior to her current assignment, she was the Director of the Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR), Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION

1986 Bachelor of Science, Applied Mathematics and Industrial Management, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 1992 Master's degree in business administration, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.
 1993 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 1997 Air Command and Staff College, Seminar
 1999 Master's degree in national security and strategic studies, Naval Command and Staff College, Newport, R.I.
 2000 Air War College, Seminar
 2004 Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Boston, Mass.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. October 1986 - October 1988, Operations Analyst, followed by Commander, Headquarters Squadron Section, 554th Range Group, Nellis AFB, Nev.
2. November 1988 - April 1992, Personnel Programs and Force Programs Analyst, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, Headquarters Tactical Air Command, Langley AFB, Va.
3. May 1992 - May 1993, Executive Officer, Directorate of Personnel, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
4. May 1993 - July 1993, Student, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
5. August 1993 - May 1995, Commander, Military Personnel Flight, 6th Mission Support Squadron, MacDill AFB, Fla.
6. June 1995 - January 1997, Chief, Personnel Policy, followed by Deputy Chief, Support Division, Air Force Colonel Matters Office, Pentagon, Washington D.C.
7. January 1997 - July 1998, Member, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Operations Group, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon, Washington D.C.
8. July 1998 - July 1999, Student, Naval Command and Staff College, Newport, R.I.
9. July 1999 - July 2001, Commander, 51st Mission Support Squadron, Osan Air Base, South Korea
10. July 2001 - May 2002, Assistant Director, Enlisted Plans and Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, Washington D.C.

11. May 2002 - July 2003, Military Assistant, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, Pentagon, Washington D.C.
12. July 2003 - July 2004, Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Boston, Mass.
13. July 2004 - July 2006, Commander, 737th Training Group, Lackland AFB, Texas
14. July 2006 - July 2007, Director, Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii
15. July 2007 - March 2009, Director, Air Force Colonels Management Office, the Pentagon, Washington D.C.
16. March 2009 - June 2011, Commander, Joint Base and 87th Air Base Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
17. June 2011 - August 2012, Director, Manpower, Organization and Resources, the Pentagon, Washington D.C.
18. August 2012 - January 2014, Director, Force Management Policy, the Pentagon, Washington D.C.
19. February 2014 - October 2015, Director, Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
20. October 2015 - present, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington D.C.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. July 2001 - May 2002, Assistant Director, Enlisted Plans and Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon, Washington D.C., as a lieutenant colonel
2. May 2002 - July 2003, Military Assistant, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, Pentagon, Washington D.C., as a lieutenant colonel
3. March 2009 - June 2011, Commander, Joint Base and 87th Air Base Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., as a colonel and brigadier general

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal
 Legion of Merit with two oak leaf cluster
 Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
 Army Commendation Medal
 Air Force Commendation Medal
 Joint Service Achievement Medal
 Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster
 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with one oak leaf cluster
 Air Force Organizational Excellence Award with three oak leaf clusters
 National Defense Service Medal with bronze star
 Global War on Terrorism Medal
 Korean Defense Service Medal
 Humanitarian Service Medal

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Tactical Air Command, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, 1990 CGO of the Year
 Tactical Air Command, 1991 Junior Personnel Manager of the Year
 Distinguished Graduate, Squadron Officer School, 1993
 6th Air Base Wing Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award, Junior Officer Category for 1995
 Headquarters Air Force, Senior Personnel Manager of the Year for 1996

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant Oct. 2, 1986
 First Lieutenant July 17, 1988
 Captain July 17, 1990
 Major Aug. 1, 1996
 Lieutenant Colonel July 1, 1999

Colonel Aug. 1, 2003
Brigadier General April 1, 2011
Major General July 24, 2014
Lieutenant General Oct 15, 2015

(Current as of October 2015)

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL A. ROCCO
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE
ON
21 MARCH 2018

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview on Marine Corps personnel.

Since our founding in 1775, Marines have answered our Nation's call, faithfully serving the American people and maintaining a standard of military excellence. Your Marine Corps is, and will continue to be, our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. We are warfighters who are ready to rapidly respond to crises around the Globe to ensure the continued security of the American people and to protect the interests that underpin our Nation. Marines will be *always faithful* to the trust which the American people have vested in them.

OUR PEOPLE

Mission first, people always. Marines are the foundation of the Marine Corps. They are the Corps' most critical resource, and always have been. Your Marines are recruited, trained, educated, and retained to win our Nation's battles. They are smart, resilient, fit, disciplined, and able to overcome adversity. Recruiting high quality youth and retaining those whose past service and future potential continues to make the Corps stronger are our highest priorities; they ensure we remain no better friend and no worse enemy.

End Strength

We thank you for the increased end strength authorization to 186,000 in the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act. This increase is allowing us to strengthen our capabilities to meet warfighting requirements. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps operating forces continue to average a deployment-to-dwell ratio of 1:2. This tempo is not sustainable over the long term; our optimal deployment-to-dwell is 1:3. Our Marines want to deploy, serve our Nation, and protect our country

from threats overseas, but we owe our Marines and their families the appropriate time to reconnect with family, refocus, learn from their most recent deployment, and train for the next deployment or contingency. In the near-term, we have made the decision to fund modernization and recover our readiness to continue to ensure our Marines are fully equipped for today's conflict. However, we must not accept a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell as the new normal.

Recruiting

Unique to all services, all recruiting efforts across the Marine Corps - officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior-service - fall under the purview of a single entity, the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Operationally, this provides us with tremendous flexibility and unity of command, facilitating efforts to meet accession requirements.

Last fiscal year, we successfully achieved all enlisted and officer recruiting goals for both the active and reserve components, and we expect to do the same again this year. We also will exceed all quality goals. The Department of Defense requires 90 percent of enlistees to have a high school diploma or equivalent (Education Tier 1), and 60 percent of enlistees to belong to Mental Groups I-III A (mental aptitude). Last year, the Marine Corps achieved 99.9 percent of Tier 1, 72 percent mental group I-III A, and expects to be at or near these levels for FY18.

While only eight percent of new Marine Corps recruits receive an enlistment bonus, these incentives are critical to enable us to ship new recruits at the right times to balance recruit loads at the recruit depots and meet school seat requirements. We appreciate Congress' support for these priority programs that assist our contracting high quality Marine recruits.

To meet future challenges in the current recruiting environment, it is imperative that we maintain our high standards both for our recruiters and those who volunteer to serve in our Corps. Recruiting quality young individuals translates into higher performance, reduced attrition, and

improved readiness for the operating forces. Our actions, commitment, and investments in recruiting today ensure a high state of readiness in our Corps tomorrow.

Retention

As the Marine Corps manages its 186,000 force, we work to retain the very best available Marines capable of fulfilling our leadership and operational needs. This is accomplished through a competitive career designation process for officers and a thorough evaluation process for enlisted Marines, both of which are designed to measure, analyze, and compare our Marines' performance and accomplishments. However, there is a continuous challenge to keep high-quality Marines in the service, especially in a competitive civilian job market.

Marine Corps retention models, systems, policies, and processes emphasize consistency of leadership, personnel stability, and sustained readiness across the force. Officer career designation incorporates a board system that enables leaders to examine officer records and accomplishments. After designation, the promotion process continues the evaluation of Marine officers. It is a primary tool by which we retain only the best and most qualified Marines.

For enlisted Marines, a tiered rating system takes into account a number of quantifiable performance factors and includes inputs from both immediate and more senior leaders. It helps to set achievable goals for Marines as they compete for retention. After initial reenlistment, the evaluation and continued retention of high quality enlisted Marines is supported by a detailed and continual performance evaluation system which is fully integrated with the promotion process. Those Marines with the best proven performance are retained and promoted.

Incentive pays remain critical to our retention effort, allowing the Marine Corps to fill hard to retain positions, such as cyber security technicians, special operators, and counter intelligence specialists. Similarly, Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs) allow us to shape our career force by targeting critical military occupational specialties (MOSS) and supporting lateral movement of

Marines to these MOSs. Continuing resolutions have delayed payments of promised SRBs, and can negatively impact re-enlistments. We appreciate the committee's continued support to ensure we have the resources required to meet our retention goals. We are open to, and always assessing, new ways to recognize and reward excellence in the Corps to ensure quality remains high and retention strong.

Reserves

Your Marine Corps Selected Reserve is fully manned at its authorized end strength of 38,500, and our reserve unit personnel readiness stands at its highest level in a generation. Unit reserve personnel readiness continues to increase from 71 percent in 2013 to over 86 percent today, with significant improvement in both enlisted and officer force management.

While these are welcome and positive trends, we continue to assess ways to further improve personnel readiness. We have implemented a comprehensive manpower management plan to provide full service support to our Reserve officers and Staff NCOs for their career management. We have expanded this plan to provide full-service manpower management support for the entire Selected Reserve. This is a talent management initiative that will help our NCOs, Staff NCOs, and officers move between commands to enhance their development and military career goals.

The increase in our officer manning has been driven in part by bonuses and incentives to attract more Marines from the active component. In addition, our Reserve Officer Commissioning Program has produced 1,199 lieutenants for the Marine Corps reserves since its creation in 2006. As a result, our ground company grade officer manning has increased from 21 percent in 2007, to 89 percent today.

Your Marine Corps Reserves has increased the number of reserve Marines activating under the 12304b mobilization authority for pre-planned training missions supporting Combatant Commander requirements. Approximately 1,100 Reserve Marines are scheduled to deploy during

the remainder of this fiscal year. The FY18 NDAA extended pre- and post-deployment health care to Marines who deploy under 12304b, and the Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 provided them with post 9/11 G.I. Bill benefits. We appreciate this subcommittee's work to implement these changes.

Blended Retirement System

The new Blended Retirement System (BRS) went into effect on January 1, 2018. The BRS is a significant change from the legacy retirement system and, while it confers a monetary benefit on the large majority of Marines who do not reach retirement eligibility, we remain concerned on the potential impact on retention behavior of the force. With over 184,000 Marines – both active and reserve - having to make an “opt-in” decision this year, will be closely monitoring BRS execution progress for any of these and other impacts.

During 2017, the Marine Corps focused on training those current Marines who may elect to enroll in the BRS this year. Headquarters Marine Corps subject matter experts visited major bases and installations, briefing over 2,000 officer and enlisted leaders on the tools available to educate their Marines. The Marine Corps implemented an integrated communications plan employing administrative messages and a website with training links, videos, and robust reference material. We utilized the Marine Corps' social media platforms to increase awareness and knowledge regarding the BRS and the associated training requirements. We are closely tracking BRS execution progress and will continue to do so throughout 2018.

Marine Corps Integration

Executing our successful gender integration plan is key to sustaining readiness, as well as ensuring we afford all Marines the opportunity to succeed as valued members of the Corps. The Marine Corps is fully committed to sustaining the most combat effective force by capitalizing on the knowledge, skills, abilities, demonstrated performance, and potential of every Marine.

To date, our plan is progressing very well. Female Marines are now represented in all previously-restricted occupational fields. Performance standards are working to ensure both male and female Marines possess the requisite ability to successfully perform the critical skills of their chosen military occupational specialty. We continue to collect data and assess all aspects of our plan through the lenses of 1) Combat Effectiveness; 2) Unit Readiness; and 3) Talent Management.

Civilian Marines

Our Civilian Marines support the mission and daily functions of the Marine Corps and are an integral part of our Total Force. They exemplify our core values; they embrace esprit de corps, teamwork, and pride in belonging to our Nation's Corps of Marines. Serving alongside our Marines throughout the world, in every occupation and at every level, our civilian appropriated-funded workforce remains by far the leanest of all services, with a ratio of one civilian to every ten active duty Marines.

Approximately 95 percent of our appropriated funded civilians work outside the Washington, DC, beltway at fifty-seven bases, stations, depots, and installations around the world. Sixty-nine percent are veterans who have chosen to continue to serve our Nation; of those, eighteen percent are disabled veterans. Our civilian non-appropriated funded workforce steadfastly continues to provide vital support to our Marines, reserve Marines, their families, and our wounded, ill and injured.

The last few years have not been easy on our Civilian Marines. Attracting and retaining top civilian talent when faced with personnel reductions, limited pay raises, and furloughs is challenging. Continued continuing resolutions also create an environment of uncertainty and threat of furlough. Nevertheless, our civilians have truly shown themselves as Semper Fidelis, keeping our Marines and their families in the forefront. For that, they have my personal admiration.

TAKING CARE OF MARINES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Taking care of Marines and their families is a key element of overall readiness and combat effectiveness. The adage “we recruit Marines, we retain families” remains as true today as ever. Our comprehensive package of services seeks the holistic fitness and readiness of our Marines and families – body, mind, spirit, and social.

Behavioral Health

The Marine Corps Behavioral Health Program is an integrated community-based service model that includes community counseling, family advocacy, suicide prevention, substance abuse, and combat operational stress. We provide world-class prevention and counseling services at each installation, and all of our behavioral health programs provide free confidential services offered by licensed counselors. These services are available to individuals, couples, families, and children. During FY17, we provided nearly 15,000 assessments and more than 100,000 counseling hours to Marines and their families.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention is one of the Marine Corp’s highest priorities; one death is too many. Preventing suicide has proven to be a very challenging task given the complex nature of the problem, but we are steady-fast in our commitment to eliminating it.

Our Marine Intercept Program (MIP) is targeted intervention for Marines who have had a suicidal ideation or attempt. MIP combines efforts from fellow Marines, commanders, installation counselors, and Marine Corps headquarters elements. It assists Marines with a suicide ideation or attempt through care coordination, regular telephone outreach by care managers, development of safety plans, and suicide assessments for Marines with a reported suicidal ideation or attempt. MIP is a very effective program that results in Marines receiving assistance faster, keeping their appointments, and, ultimately, saving lives.

The Marine Corps DSTRESS Line is a 24/7/365, Marine-specific call center providing phone, chat, and video-telephone capability for anonymous counseling for circumstances across the stress continuum. DSTRESS calls can discuss stress and anger management, grief and loss, deployment cycles, parent-child relationships, couples communication, marital issues, relationships, relocations, and suicidal crisis. To date, the DSTRESS Line has had approximately 45,000 sessions with Marines, attached Sailors, and their families. Since its inception in 2010, DSTRESS has helped save 39 Marines who were in imminent danger situations.

Our current social media campaign - “#BeThere_Marine” - is a call to action that motivates Marines to take steps and pay attention to individuals experiencing emotional distress or expressing suicidal thoughts. To date, nearly 800,000 individuals have viewed and shared these social media posts and public service announcements worldwide.

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response

Protecting our Marines and eradicating sexual assault from our ranks are top priorities for me and our Corps. We are committed to eliminating incidents of sexual assault by increasing awareness through prevention and education, victim centered support, intimidation free reporting, thorough investigation, and accountability for those who commit sexual crimes. Any Marine who comes forward to report a sexual assault will receive support, even when the sexual assault occurred prior to service.

Based on results from the 2016 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey for Active Duty Service members, sexual assault prevalence has decreased by 30 percent since 2014. Conversely, reporting levels have increased. We believe that reduced prevalence with increased reporting means we are reducing the number of unreported incidents, ensuring that Marines who experience sexual assault get the support they need.

In an effort to better reach junior enlisted Marines and officers, the Marine Corps has developed “Join the Conversation,” a professional military education campaign that helps guide Marines in identifying five destructive behaviors—hazing, sexual assault, sexual harassment, retaliation, and alcohol misuse. Marines are educated on the importance of understanding destructive behaviors, the negative impact of those behaviors to the unit and the Corps at large, and what Marines can do to combat them. This initiative is now formal instruction at The Basic School.

Male Marines are less likely to report a sexual assault than females. Since so few studies focus on males, the Marine Corps conducted interviews with its Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs) to learn about their interactions with male Marines who experienced a sexual assault. We learned valuable information regarding barriers to reporting, reasons why male Marines report, and techniques to build rapport with this population. This information is part of current SAPR training for SARCs and VAs.

Personal and Professional Development

Our Marine For Life Cycle is a career-long process that helps Marines prepare for transition to civilian life. We provide a continuum of tangible learning or experienced-based opportunities at nine different action points with specific emphasis at the Marine’s first permanent duty station, promotion to Corporal, and the Transition Readiness Seminar.

At their first permanent duty station, Marines complete the Personal Readiness Seminar within 90 days of arrival to the installation. This seminar provides an overview of Personal and Professional Development services to include Voluntary Education, Career Technical/Credentialing, Personal Financial Management, Family Member Employment Assistance, and Information and Referral; the seminar also emphasizes financial readiness awareness.

At time of promotion to Corporal, all Marines must complete “Your Readiness” training. This online, MarineNet training provides an overview of Personal and Professional Development services, the reenlistment process, transition readiness, developing the Individual Transition Plan, and an introduction to available resources and support provided at our installations.

Approximately 12-14 months prior to separation, or 24 months prior to retirement, Marines complete the Transition Readiness Seminar. The week-long program seminar includes a mandatory standardized core curriculum followed by three two-day track options to align with their future goals and aspirations - Accessing Higher Education, Career and Technical Training, or Entrepreneurship.

No later than 90 days prior separation, Marines meet with their commanding officer for Capstone. During Capstone, the commanding officer will validate whether the Marine has met their career readiness standards. If a Marine does not meet their career readiness standards or have a viable transition plan, a warm handover will be provided to Department of Labor or Veterans Affairs partner agencies for additional post-transition assistance.

The mission of Marine Corps Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) is to help Marines receive transferable credit for their military skills and work experience. COOL links Marines with civilian certifications related to their military occupational specialties. It is a public website accessible to all current Marines, as well as veterans, spouses, potential employers, enterprises, credentialing agencies, and associations. A credential translates Marine Corps technical skills into marketable language recognized by employers. The Marine Corps will pay for examination fees and annual maintenance for enlisted Marines to earn civilian/industry credentials closely aligned with their occupational specialty.

The Marine Corps continually collaborates with the other services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve our transition programs. We recently

participated in a Transition Assistance Program hearing and follow-up roundtable with these partners and the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. The Marine Corps plans to meet throughout the year with the Committee to continuously improve the metrics relating to successful transition from military to civilian employment.

Wounded Warrior Care

The Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) continues to execute our Recovery Coordination Program in support of wounded, ill, or injured (WII) Marines and their families, in a manner that greatly facilitates their recovery and upholds our enduring commitment to "keep faith" with those who have incurred life changing impairments in service to our Nation. Regardless of the origin of affliction, our Marines require and genuinely deserve access to the comprehensive recovery care available through the WWR.

WWR Recovery Care Coordinators, in coordination with medical providers and unit leaders, help WII Marines develop and execute their individual Comprehensive Recovery Plans, which provide the road map for a successful transition. WII Marines with complex care coordination needs are assessed for post-separation support requirements. When appropriate, those Marines are transferred to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) designated Lead Coordinator prior to their medical discharge to ensure seamless support.

WWR maintains faith with our Marines through our District Injured Support Coordinators, who are geographically dispersed around the country and provide one-on-one support as needed, and the Sergeant Merlin German Call Center, which conducts outreach calls to Marines and receives and responds to calls for assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Since our WWR was established in 2007, thousands of WII Marines and family members transitioning from active service have benefitted from a full spectrum of support services that begins with physical recovery needs and increasingly focuses on post-service employment and

education opportunities as they heal. Marines and their families, members of Congress, and the public at large can be assured that the Marine Corps, through the WWR, will continue to expertly provide recovery care coordination support at all times.

Marine Corps Business and Support Services

The Marine Corps delivers many of its quality of life programs via an integrated Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) construct that combines Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR); Marine Corps Exchange (MCX); Warfighter and Family Services; and Child Development Programs. This integrated model is unique within DoD and provides many operating efficiencies, including consolidated non-appropriated fund back-office support, e.g., human resources, finance and accounting, procurement, construction, and information technology. Our focus on efficiency continues today with transformation and innovation pursuits, such as a shared services center for all MCCS NAF transactional accounting functions; we are expecting a significant cumulative NAF benefit over a 10 year period.

The MCX is an integral self-sustaining business component of MCCS, delivering products and services in garrison and expeditionary environments, while producing an invaluable NAF dividend to our MWR and family programs. Marines and their families can count on real savings when they shop at the MCX. The 2017 market basket survey showed an average savings of approximately 26 percent. Further, the MCX is proud to employ military family members who represent approximately 33 percent of our workforce.

Transformation and innovation are the fabric of MCCS as we continue to assess and implement new delivery models by leveraging technology, partnerships, and sponsorships. The Marine Corps is also an active participant in DoD Business Reforms that encompass many of the programs and services within the MCCS portfolio. We are committed to seeking efficiencies across

the Department while preserving our highly effective MCCS organization that is best attuned to meeting Marine Corps operational requirements.

CONCLUSION

The Marines of our Corps represent the individuals of our Nation who have stepped forward and sworn to defend and protect it. Through recruiting, training, education, and retention of men and women of character who take up our challenge to become one of “the Few and the Proud,” we will enhance the quality of our Corps and our overall combat effectiveness. By ensuring that we take care of all Marines and their families, we fulfill our responsibility to keep faith with the honor, courage, and commitment they have so freely given.

Our individual Marines are our most precious asset. They are proud of what they do. They are proud of the “Eagle, Globe, and Anchor” and what it represents to our Nation. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our Nation’s call.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Lieutenant General Michael A. Rocco
Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs,
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

Lieutenant General Rocco received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from St. Johns University in New York and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in May 1983. After graduating from The Basic School in February 1984, he was meritoriously augmented and he reported to Naval Aviation Training Command, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. Upon designation as a Naval Aviator in February 1986, Lieutenant General Rocco was assigned to HMLA-367 as an AH-1J pilot where he served in the Logistics Department.

He deployed to Okinawa, Japan, and was promoted to Captain in May 1988. He subsequently served in a variety of billets to include Training Officer, Flight Officer, NATOPS Officer, and Weapons and Tactics Instructor for Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367 (HMLA).

In August 1990, HMLA-367 deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Lieutenant General Rocco was assigned as a Flight Leader and led over 40 combat missions. Upon his return in March 1991, he was assigned as the Director of Safety and Standardization for HMLA-367.

In August 1992, Lieutenant General Rocco reported to Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) in Quantico, Virginia. While at AWS, he received the Marine Corps Aviation Association Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Johnson Award, given to the outstanding aviation student. Upon graduation from AWS in May 1993, Lieutenant General Rocco reported to Fleet Marine Forces Europe for further assignment to the Royal Marine Exchange Program in Yeovilton, England. He deployed twice to Bardufoss, Norway, and made numerous deployments throughout Europe with the Royal Marines. Upon completion of the exchange tour, he was selected to attend the Naval Command and Staff Course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, where he received a Master of Arts Degree in National Policy and Strategic Studies.

Graduating from the Naval War College in May 1996, Lieutenant General Rocco received orders to 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) and was assigned to HMLA-369. In February 1997, Lieutenant General Rocco was assigned as the Operations Officer of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 164 (HMM) (Reinforced) and sailed with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU (SOC)) in August 1997.

Once back from deployment, Lieutenant General Rocco assumed the post of Executive Officer of HMLA-369. In February 1999, he assumed the post of Executive Officer of Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 303 (HMT). Later that same year, he was assigned to Headquarters 3d MAW, where he served as Staff Secretary for the Commanding General of 3d MAW. In June 2000, Lieutenant General Rocco was assigned as the Executive Officer of Marine Aircraft Group 39 (MAG). In March 2001, Lieutenant General Rocco assumed Command of HMLA-369 and after a successful deployment to Okinawa in support of the Unit Deployment Program, he relinquished command of the Gunfighters in January 2003.

In February 2003, he deployed with MAG-39 Headquarters in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Upon returning from OIF, he attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, D.C., and received a Master of Science Degree in National Resource Strategy. In June 2004, he was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In January 2007, he was transferred back to 3d MAW for refresher training and served as the Commanding Officer, MAG-39 from June 2007 to June 2009.

In August 2009, he was promoted to Brigadier General and served as the Deputy Director, J-3, U.S. European Command, Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, until July 2011. Lieutenant

General Rocco then served as the Director, Strategies and Plans Division, Plans, Policies, and Operations Directorate (PP&O), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps in Washington, D.C. from July 2011 until June 2014. In June 2014, Lieutenant General Rocco assumed command of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, and remained in command until July 2016. From August to December 2016, he served as the Director, Manpower Plans and Policy Division, and from January to August of 2017, he served as the Director, Manpower Management Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. In August of 2017, Lieutenant General Rocco was promoted to his current rank and assumed the duties of his current position as the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

His personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal with Gold Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with "V", Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with "V", Air Medal with numeral 2, Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal with Gold Star.

He is married to Susan Rocco and they have three children, Michael, Matthew, and Mara.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

APRIL 13, 2018

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. ROSEN

Ms. ROSEN. I would like to ask about coverage for military children with autism spectrum disorder under TRICARE. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is often treated with applied behavior analysis (ABA), an intensive therapy that helps children with autism acquire the skills they need to function in their communities, succeed in school, and, in general, fulfill their potential. Many studies have shown that the earlier a child receives ABA, the better the outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 of every 68 children and 1 in 42 boys are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. There are ongoing shortages and wait times for ABA services that have resulted in military children with ASD waiting for treatment. Additionally, the transition to two TRICARE contractors has resulted in ABA providers waiting for credentialing and reimbursements. In light of these circumstances, are there ongoing efforts to address wait times and delays caused by credentialing and reimbursement backlogs? Are there any plans or discussions to cut ABA reimbursement rates?

General SEAMANDS. We share your concerns about access and reimbursement rates for applied behavior analysis (ABA). Soldier readiness is directly tied to family readiness. The Army supports Soldiers and their family members with special needs through our Exceptional Family Member Program. Our program helps to ensure that family members will have access and availability to necessary care when they transition to a new duty station. To the extent there may be issues with reimbursement rates or backlogs for ABA, the Defense Health Agency, which oversees the Military Health System, is best suited for specifically addressing the concerns.

Ms. ROSEN. I would like to ask about coverage for military children with autism spectrum disorder under TRICARE. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is often treated with applied behavior analysis (ABA), an intensive therapy that helps children with autism acquire the skills they need to function in their communities, succeed in school, and, in general, fulfill their potential. Many studies have shown that the earlier a child receives ABA, the better the outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 of every 68 children and 1 in 42 boys are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. There are ongoing shortages and wait times for ABA services that have resulted in military children with ASD waiting for treatment. Additionally, the transition to two TRICARE contractors has resulted in ABA providers waiting for credentialing and reimbursements. In light of these circumstances, are there ongoing efforts to address wait times and delays caused by credentialing and reimbursement backlogs? Are there any plans or discussions to cut ABA reimbursement rates?

Admiral BURKE. Instilling confidence in timely access to quality health care is essential to force readiness and ensuring the welfare of Sailors and the dedicated Navy families who support them. This is particularly vital for families with special needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, which require access to specialized therapies and techniques, such as applied behavior analysis. TRICARE and oversight of managed care support contractors fall under the auspices of the Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA). Accordingly, I must defer to DHA to respond to questions regarding TRICARE contracts, credentialing, as well as reimbursement backlogs and rates across the DOD-wide TRICARE network. Thank you for your interest in, and commitment to, ensuring the quality of health care for our Sailors and their families.

Ms. ROSEN. I would like to ask about coverage for military children with autism spectrum disorder under TRICARE. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is often treated with applied behavior analysis (ABA), an intensive therapy that helps children with autism acquire the skills they need to function in their communities, succeed in school, and, in general, fulfill their potential. Many studies have shown that the earlier a child receives ABA, the better the outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 of every 68 children and 1 in 42 boys are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. There are ongoing shortages and wait times for ABA services that have resulted in military children with ASD waiting for treatment. Additionally, the transition to two TRICARE contractors has resulted in ABA providers waiting for credentialing and reimbursements. In light of these circum-

stances, are there ongoing efforts to address wait times and delays caused by credentialing and reimbursement backlogs? Are there any plans or discussions to cut ABA reimbursement rates?

General GROSSO. Air Force cannot respond to this Question for the Record. The TRICARE Program is owned by DHA THP; therefore, we defer to DHA THP for a response.

Ms. ROSEN. I would like to ask about coverage for military children with autism spectrum disorder under TRICARE. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is often treated with applied behavior analysis (ABA), an intensive therapy that helps children with autism acquire the skills they need to function in their communities, succeed in school, and, in general, fulfill their potential. Many studies have shown that the earlier a child receives ABA, the better the outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 of every 68 children and 1 in 42 boys are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. There are ongoing shortages and wait times for ABA services that have resulted in military children with ASD waiting for treatment. Additionally, the transition to two TRICARE contractors has resulted in ABA providers waiting for credentialing and reimbursements. In light of these circumstances, are there ongoing efforts to address wait times and delays caused by credentialing and reimbursement backlogs? Are there any plans or discussions to cut ABA reimbursement rates?

General ROCCO. The Marine Corps supports Marines and their family members with special needs through our Exceptional Family Member Program. Our program helps to ensure that family members will have access and availability to necessary care when they transition to a new duty station. The Defense Health Agency (DHA) oversees the Military Health System. DHA identifies credentialing requirements and establishes reimbursement rates for medical care delivered by authorized providers in the TRICARE network. DHA has the responsibility to address waitlists for care and expand the network of authorized providers.

