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**MILITARY DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL
CHIEFS: PERSONNEL POSTURE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:28 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jim Banks [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JIM BANKS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM INDIANA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

Mr. BANKS. The subcommittee will come to order. I ask unanimous consent that the chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time. Without objection, so ordered.

I want to welcome everyone to this hearing of the Military Personnel Subcommittee. Today's hearing is focused on the personnel policymakers who are charged with developing the policies, guidance, and programs that affect recruiting, accessions, assignments, benefits, career progression, and so much more.

And it is no small secret that policies, especially personnel policies, drive military culture. Strategic leaders in their efforts to form a shared belief system risk substituting continuous oversight with policy and guidance on how to think, feel, and behave. And some of the most culturally transformative guidance and policies in the military Services over the last decade have been in the personnel arena. Most notably, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

For more than 10 years, former President Obama and President Biden have issued executive orders establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion. Navigating these policies is no small task, especially considering the military personnel system that you are tasked with running is supposed to be based on merit not social engineering.

I am concerned that policies you must implement not only contradict the military culture necessary to ensure an effective fighting force but that the culture upheaval this administration is pushing on the Department of Defense [DOD] and on the military Services may continue to lead to recruiting and retention problems.

For example, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [DEI]. It is no secret that the backlash to DEI policies has been very strong. Last week Axios quoted Johnny Taylor, the president of Society for Human Resource Management, "The backlash to DEI is real, and I mean in ways that I have actually never seen it before." And yet

even as Americans have pushed back, the Department of Defense continues to focus on DEI.

This has an impact on recruiting and retention. This has an impact on potential servicemembers seeing their future success as dependent on their race or gender, not merit. We are going to end our recruiting crisis by chipping away at merit-based personnel actions with requirements and directives to take -- I am sorry. We are not going to end our recruiting crisis by chipping away at merit-based personnel actions with requirements and directives to take, for example, gender into consideration.

As Lieutenant General Burt advocated for when addressing state Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer [LGBTQ] laws, "If the good match for a job does not feel safe being themselves and performing at their highest potential at a given location, or if their family could be denied critical health care due to the laws in that state, I am compelled to consider a different candidate and perhaps less qualified."

The bottom line is that I am concerned. Especially that this administration and the military Services are dismissing the cultural changes that these personnel policies are forcing on the military without considering their effects on recruiting. It may just be a correlation that recruiting has struggled since the focus on DEI as a national security priority. But I am deeply skeptical of that. This needs to be investigated.

But now I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. Lieutenant General Douglas Stitt of the U.S. Army, Vice Admiral Richard Cheeseman, Jr., Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Personnel, Lieutenant General Caroline Miller, with the Air Force, Lieutenant General James Glynn with the U.S. Marine Corps, and Katharine Kelley, the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital.

Before hearing from our witnesses, let me offer Ranking Member Kim an opportunity to make any opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Banks can be found in the Appendix on page 33.]

STATEMENT OF HON. ANDY KIM, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you all for joining. Without Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Guardians, we couldn't man military weapons systems, deliver humanitarian assistance or effectively respond to security challenges around the globe.

I have read your testimonies. And there is no doubt you are all concerned about a number of issues, including young people's decreasing propensity to serve, their lack of connection to the value of military service and that affects, also, the changing recruitment landscape that is out there that the Chairman and I have been grappling with the rest of the members on this committee.

I share these concerns and would add that this is why I support taking the steps necessary to widen the pool of applicants we can draw from for all our all-volunteer force. I am encouraged by the prep courses that the Army and Navy have established to help potential recruits overcome physical fitness barriers into service and

meet or exceed service in Department of Defense physical requirements.

I am encouraged by how the Services are employing innovative tools to increase the impact and effectiveness of the recruiter force from the Army's creation of a recruiter military career track to ensure that those who serve as first line ambassadors in schools and communities across the country are well-prepared, to the Navy's recruiting operation center, which now monitors recruiting efforts in real-time, and the Air Force's barriers to service review of internal policies, which resulted in an additional 6,800 people being eligible to serve as Airmen.

These are just a few examples of how you are all trying to think out of the box to encourage military service among our youth.

Another important factor is ensuring we have the force we need is to pay attention to the quality of life needs of servicemembers and their families. I am excited that myself and many others on this subcommittee have been a part of the Quality of Life Panel that released its report and recommendations last week.

By focusing our efforts on solutions to address pay and compensation, we will make sure servicemembers and their families have enough money to put food on the table.

I also often hear from many servicemembers in my district who are stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst about how they struggle to get access to the medical and child care that they need.

These are issues that I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can agree need to be addressed. As I have said before, we ask our servicemembers to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, which they voluntarily do day in and day out, which means that we owe it to them and their families to do everything we can to ensure that they have all that they need when they need it.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for having this hearing today so we can discuss many of the important issues of personnel policies on the lives of our servicemembers. And thank you to the witnesses again for being here. And I yield back the balance of my time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kim can be found in the Appendix on page 44.]

Mr. BANKS. Thank you, Ranking Member Kim. Each witness will have the opportunity to present his or her testimony and each member will have an opportunity to question the witnesses for five minutes.

We respectfully ask the witnesses to summarize their testimony in three minutes or less. Your written comments and statements will be made part of the hearing record. With that, Lieutenant General Stitt, you may make your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DOUGLAS F. STITT,
USA, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY**

General STITT. Good afternoon, Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Soldiers and civilians of the United States Army.

I submitted a statement for the record and want to highlight a few points from it now.

The United States Army is amidst a fundamental transformation. We are adapting and changing capabilities, force structure, and our accessions enterprise. These collective efforts combine to enable ready combat formations while ensuring the care of our people and their quality of life is commensurate with their service.

The Army senior leadership directed fundamental changes to improve the effectiveness of our accessions formations in the face of this challenging recruiting environment. These transformative efforts include enhancements of our recruiting workforce, engaging across the totality of the labor market, and a streamlined reporting structure. Compared to the same point last year, we are ahead in our accessions mission, and the Army is on pace to meet its fiscal year 2024 end strength of 445,000 in the active component.

The Army remains a great place to serve, as demonstrated by our historically high retention rates. In fiscal year 2023, the Army achieved 102 percent of its retention mission. And we remain on glide path to exceed our retention mission in 2024.

We remain focused on critical programs that get upstream and prevent harmful behaviors from entering our formations. Our civilian workforce is a readiness multiplier across the total Army. And our investments in their capabilities are crucial for meeting the needs of the Army of the future.

All of these efforts contribute to Army readiness and are vital for retaining our Soldiers, civilians, and their families.

For our Army families, we programmed \$1.6 billion across fiscal years 2024 to 2028 to improve the Army family housing inventory. For unaccompanied Soldiers, we invested over \$2.1 billion annually in the construction, sustainment, restoration, and modernization across fiscal years 2025 to 2029 for our barracks.

With congressional support, we will keep the Army on a sustainable strategic path as we transform for the future. We will deliver ready combat formations with advanced capabilities to defend our nation and its interest.

We understand the critical importance of preserving the all-volunteer force. We will continue investments in the quality of life for our Soldiers, civilians, and their families. We will maintain and build cohesive teams and foster climates of trust grounded in our shared Army values.

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, members of this committee, I thank you for your generous and unwavering support for our talented Soldiers, civilian professionals, and their families. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Stitt can be found in the Appendix on page 46.]

Mr. BANKS. Thank you.

Vice Admiral Cheeseman.

**STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL RICK CHEESEMAM, USN, CHIEF
OF NAVAL PERSONNEL, U.S. NAVY**

Admiral CHEESEMAM. Good afternoon, Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished subcommittee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored to be here to serve and represent the Sailors of our United States Navy, a high quality, motivated workforce comprised of the best America has to offer.

The Navy budget request for fiscal year 2025 fund holistic efforts to support our warfighters and the foundation that supports them. It prioritizes our people with increases in military pay and basic allowances and additional funds for recruiting and retention bonuses.

The budget also prioritizes several quality of life in service initiatives, including tools and education for our leadership specifically to address mental health, suicide and other harmful behaviors that build upon quality of service investments from the fiscal year 2024 appropriation.

And while I am grateful for your continued support of our Sailors and their families, I must stress that our Navy remains most lethal and effective when we are able to execute under a full year budget.

We remain in a very challenging recruiting environment. Our current projected miss is 6,700 against a 40,600 sailor mission, which is significantly better than what we anticipated at the beginning of the fiscal year. And I remain optimistic that investments in marketing and data analytics will show additional progress.

As we position ourselves for success in the coming year, I look forward to sharing our continuous performance improvement.

With recruiting challenges, there is a need for a greater retention. I appreciate your steadfast support in funding Sailor Special Incentive Pay and Bonuses, which are vital to targeting complex skill sets. These monetary incentives, coupled with several other initiatives, have helped us maintain our historically healthy retention levels.

Last month, we rolled out Culture of Excellence 2.0, which focuses on building great people, great leaders, and great teams and prepares our warfighters to dominate in combat, innovate and solve hard problems, and prevent harmful behaviors.

It simplifies, streamlines, and aligns several programs and concepts into an actionable approach for building great culture while providing tools for Commanders to better understand and act on the needs of their people.

Our men and women of the United States Navy Active, Reserve, and civilian, along with their families, give our Navy the decisive edge. We must build strong warfighting teams, recruit, and retain talented people from all of America, provide them world class training and education and ensure they are prepared for when their Navy story ends, whether it be a single enlistment or a full career.

You and every American can be proud of your Sailors and their families. I appreciate your continued support, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Cheeseman can be found in the Appendix on page 62.]

Mr. BANKS. Thank you.

Lieutenant General Glynn.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES F. GLYNN,
USMC, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE
AFFAIRS, U.S. MARINE CORPS**

General GLYNN. Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is my privilege to appear before you along with Sergeant Major Jake Rife to provide an overview of your Marine Corps through the lens of its personnel.

Your Marine Corps and your Marines remain strong. Despite headwinds, we met the recruiting and retention missions for last year and expect to do so again this year. We have done so while maintaining top quality, something on which we will never compromise.

Rest assured the caliber of our Marines directly contributes to the warfighting capability and readiness of the United States Marine Corps.

Despite our successes, recruiting still presents challenges, including a shrinking pool of eligible youth who are increasingly unfamiliar with military service.

To counter these trends, we are modernizing how we recruit and are working to increase access to schools. We ask for your continued support of these efforts and also to continue to resource our vital advertising efforts.

In short, we must collectively ensure the health of our all-volunteer force and the strategic advantage it provides, talent, capability, and warfighting excellence.

I am pleased to report that we continue to retain Marines at a historic pace, both in number and in quality. It reinforces that once an individual becomes a Marine, they desire to remain a Marine. And the desire for continued service speaks to our ethos.

As we listen to Marines, they explain that being part of a team, accomplishing the mission, taking care of one another, and serving something bigger than themselves is what is motivating to continue in uniform. It also demonstrates that Marines believe in the leaders and processes that assign, promote, and award in a fair and transparent manner.

Our talent management efforts to date remain foundational to force design and the future success of our Corps. They are helping us maximize the number of fully trained, qualified, experienced, and deployable Marines in the operational forces. And the overarching goal remains to increase Marine Corps warfighting capability and sustain our ability, really our responsibility, to be the nation's premier expeditionary force in readiness.

And to that end, as we meet this afternoon, more than 30,000 Marines are forward deployed or forward stationed with their families prepared to respond should that call come.

Warfighting readiness is built on trust, including trust in the Marine Corps support of families. Family readiness for us is quite simply readiness. We are thankful for the attention you and the Quality of Life Panel have given to important policies and programs from child care, health care, housing, spouse employment or compensation. These are things that matter to Marines, to our families, and to me.

We are leaning in with equal vigor in areas such as preventing destructive behaviors and increasing resilience through implemen-

tation of the Marine Corps Total Fitness Strategy. And I look forward to our dialogue on these topics as we continue to provide Marines with the highest quality of life.

Again, it is my honor to represent the Marine Corps today, and I look forward to your questions. Semper Fidelis.

[The prepared statement of General Glynn can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

Mr. BANKS. We understand that Lieutenant General Miller is not feeling well, and she has submitted her opening statement of the record. All members already have a copy of that. So we will move on to Ms. Kelley.

[The prepared statement of General Miller can be found in the Appendix on page 91.]

STATEMENT OF KATHARINE KELLEY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF SPACE OPERATIONS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL, U.S. SPACE FORCE

Ms. KELLEY. Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today representing the over 14,000 uniformed and civilian Guardians of your Space Force.

Our military and our nation's modern way of life depends on your Space Force successfully securing our national interests in, from, and to space.

And while advanced technology is a vital component of our capabilities, our Guardians are the foundation of our ability to maintain freedom of action in space.

Building and maintaining this foundation starts with winning the fight for talent in an era where opportunities to work in the growing space economy are expanding at an unprecedented pace. The Space Force must be seen as an employer of choice.

We need to offer competitive pay and benefits compelling, career paths, and strong support for spouses and families. We must attract the talent we need through these mechanisms. And we must ensure our target recruitment population know about these initiatives through strong branding and talent acquisition efforts. But our work does not stop with attracting this talent. We must continue to focus on keeping the trained and experienced Guardians we have invested in and depend on.

Thanks for your strong partnership, we continue to make progress serving as a pathfinder in modernizing the Department's approach to talent management, starting with enhanced space education.

For example, we are establishing a refreshed Office of Training course, which will expose new Officers to the full spectrum of our space mission sets before they arrive at their first duty station.

We have also partnered with some of our nation's top universities to provide new models of intermediate and advanced professional education for both uniformed and civilian Guardians.

We are revamping our performance assessment and leadership selection process, drawing best practices from both inside and outside the Department to build high performing teams and effective leaders.

Perhaps most importantly with your tremendous support, we are working to build a first of its kind flexible military service model

as envisioned in the recently passed Space Force Personnel Management Act. This important legislation will enhance career flexibility while allowing us to retain invaluable technical talent that is so vital to the Space Force mission.

We are doing all these things and much more not just to take care of Guardians and their families because it is the right thing to do, and it certainly is, but because taking care of Guardians is required to win.

Warfighting success in space starts not with technology on orbit, but with the people who develop it, launch it, operate it, sustain, and exploit it in defense of our nation. Your support enables our Guardians to stand ready to face any challenge in the space domain.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to represent. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kelley can be found in the Appendix on page 83.]

Mr. BANKS. I want to thank all of our witnesses for your opening statements. I will begin with questions and yield myself five minutes.

Last year, the White House objected to a provision that I introduced in the National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA] based on merit and requiring all the branches to maintain merit in accessions and promotions and require the military to base promotion decisions specifically on who is the best candidate for the job regardless of their race, inferring that somehow merit contradicted DOD's strategic advantage of drawing from a diverse group of people is what the administration responded when they opposed my amendment.

My question for all of you is this. Do any of your personnel policies permit consideration of race or gender in promotion decisions? And we will start with Lieutenant General Stitt.

General STITT. Chairman Banks, we approach promotion and selection from merit looking at the whole of the candidate coming before any promotion or selection board. We do not set demographic quotas in our sessions, promotions, or selection.

Mr. BANKS. So you don't consideration of race or gender in promotion decisions?

General STITT. Our promotion and selection considerations are based upon the merit of the individual coming before that respective promotion or election board.

Mr. BANKS. Admiral Cheeseman?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Chairman Banks, thanks for the question. Race and gender are not part of the merit-based decision for promotion. It is about being best and most fully qualified.

Mr. BANKS. Lieutenant General Glynn?

General GLYNN. Likewise, Chairman Banks, best and fully qualified status.

Mr. BANKS. Lieutenant General Miller?

General MILLER. Same for the Air Force.

Mr. BANKS. And Ms. Kelley?

Ms. KELLEY. And the Space Force, sir.

Mr. BANKS. Do you think that considering merit alone in promotion decisions would harm the Department's lethality? We will begin with you, Lieutenant General Stitt.

General STITT. Chairman Banks, utilizing our merit-based promotion system, I believe we have the best land force in the world.

Admiral CHEESEMEN. Sir, we are looking to keep every talented individual, and it is based on merit.

General GLYNN. Chairman, I opened with comments on warfighting readiness and lethality. That is our focus and that is what our system emphasizes.

General MILLER. It is the same in the Air Force. We need the best and the brightest based on merit.

Ms. KELLEY. Sir, it's the same for the Space Force, merit-based to develop the best Guardians possible.

Mr. BANKS. Do you think that considering merit alone in promotion decisions would harm -- I am sorry. I just asked you that. Okay. My last question on that note, now that universities are prohibited from engaging in affirmative action, are Officers who joined your Services through Reserve Officers' Training Corps [ROTC] or Officers Candidate School [OCS] less qualified than those who came through ROTC and OCS before the affirmative action ban? Simply yes or no.

General STITT. We utilize a merit-based selection and assessment for applicants coming into both ROTC and the Officer Candidate School. Admiral Cheeseman. No, sir.

General GLYNN. I don't see how they are affected by it at this point.

General MILLER. No, sir.

Ms. KELLEY. Not for the Space Force.

Mr. BANKS. Okay. What policies have you implemented or changed to address overall what has been a very challenging recruiting year for each of your Services?

General STITT. Chairman Banks, the challenges that we face today didn't happen overnight. They won't be fixed overnight. But the United States Army Recruiting Command has aggressively transformed looking at considering the totality of the labor force, not just focusing on high school graduates. We have recently created a new Warrant Officer specialty of 420-T[AE1], which is a Warrant Officer who is focused on the technical and procedural aspects of our recruiting.

We are creating a new military occupational specialty within our Enlisted Corps, Military Occupational Specialty [MOS]-420-T to serve as a professional recruiter. Recruiting command has adjusted their training and intake to better upskill and reskill our recruiting workforce to operate within this challenging recruiting environment.

We are piloting and innovating at scale across our recruiting stations around the globe to look at those stations where we are seeing small gains. How could those small gains be brought forward into a brigade and potentially across the command? So a variety of efforts.

Mr. BANKS. I will come back to the rest later. I only have a few seconds left. And I want to ask the Vice Admiral a quick question.

The Navy's Task Force 1 Report claims that diverse organizations perform better on the findings from a 2015 McKinsey study. Do you recall that?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Yes, sir. I am aware of that study.

Mr. BANKS. Recently that study has been completely debunked. Many sources have debunked the study. Have you gone back to correct the findings of the McKinsey study and divert from relying on it to justify DEI in the United States Navy?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, I am aware of the Econ Watch report that you are referring to. That is a recent report. The Navy is a learning organization. So we will certainly review that report and compare it to the McKinsey Report. It is important to note that in the Task Force One Navy Report, there was another reference from the National Academy of Sciences that talked about something very similar in a little bit different respect.

But I think it is important to note overall as far as the Navy's program goes that it is not about diversity for diversity's sake. As we have just talked about, it is about a meritocracy. It is about the best and most fully qualified. And we have created a program where, you know, we want to make sure that all of our Sailors and all of our future Sailors understand that they can succeed in the Navy, and they have access to the same opportunity.

Mr. BANKS. Ranking Member Kim?

Mr. KIM. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. While your service's needs are each different, recruiting challenges remain a top area of concern for all of you. I understand the department is piloting some changes on how to look at some medical conditions and whether they impact a person's ability to serve.

When it comes to medical accession standards with regard to recruitment efforts, do you think that they should be modernized to consider advances in the management of chronic conditions that may not necessarily impact the ability to deploy? I just wanted to get your thoughts on that. Maybe we will start with you, Lieutenant General.

General STITT. Ranking Member Kim, we, the Army, participate along with the other Services and the DOD accessions military workgroup where we provide recommendations and review applicable Department of Defense instructions on medical accession standards.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, thanks for that question. Certainly the Navy is all for any accession standards that -- you know, any review of an accession standard that, you know, allows us to bring somebody to boot camp, have them successfully complete that boot camp, and their first tour. So we are actively involved in those groups. We are looking to assess each standard, you know, case by case and look forward to continued development.

Mr. KIM. Okay. Great.

General GLYNN. Congressman, I would affirm in a similar manner anything that in the modern era with what we know about medicine and how it -- what the long-term impacts on someone's ability to serve and deploy in the name of warfighting and readiness. If we can modify those standards and adapt them, and the Department looks at it regularly and we have the opportunity to

submit those kinds of recommendations, we continue to support the modernization of it along with the systems that support them.

Mr. KIM. Okay. Great. Lieutenant General Miller, Ms. Kelley, are you on a similar page like the others?

General MILLER. Yes, yes, Congressman, we are. Ms. Kelley. I am as well. The Space Force is uniquely positioned to test some of this as well based on a little bit of a different service model that we have so.

Mr. KIM. That's interesting.

Ms. KELLEY. So we are certainly in support of the larger efforts as well.

Mr. KIM. I appreciate your willingness to think through this and figure out, again, how we can just continue to adapt to this.

Another aspect that has come out in conversations here with the subcommittee, when the Services Senior Enlisted leaders have publicly advocated for significant military pay raise, especially amongst Junior Enlisted servicemembers, I wanted to get your thoughts on this. Do you agree with that assessment? Are there other compensation policies that should be re-examined? Maybe we'll start from right to left this time around.

Ms. KELLEY. Yes, thank you. The Space Force is certainly very much supportive of the look at what we can do for pay, especially for Junior Enlisted. We certainly are very appreciative of some of the feedback and the efforts that went into the quality of life report. And we are going to continue to partner with both Congress and inside the department to figure out where we go next.

The piece that I think is also very important is that we are cognizant of and actively using the existing pay authorities that Congress has already given us. And I think from a Space Force perspective because of so many unique skill sets that we have, we are taking advantage of those today. And we look forward to the continued dialogue on where this goes, and we certainly want to be part of that conversation.

Mr. KIM. All right. Thank you.

General MILLER. Yeah, I will agree with Ms. Kelley that, you know, looking at how to better make sure that our Airmen and their families are taken care of, we are 100 percent all in. The challenge that we have, of course, is the Military Personnel Appropriations [MILPERS approps]. And so, you know, it is tight right now. It is not going to get any better. So we are going to have to have the appropriations to go with that but fully support that.

The only other potential concern we have is, you know, compression. If we are going to -- you know, how that is going to impact the higher ranks. So I think it is a whole looking at everything. But any pay and benefits that we can do to support our Airmen and their families, we are all in. Thank you.

Mr. KIM. Message received back to us. I mean, we know we need to be part of this equation as well and, you know, wanted to get your thoughts on this.

I just wanted to end with one last question particular to Vice Admiral Cheeseman. You mirrored your Future Sailor Program after the Army's. What do you think is the most important lesson learned since creating that program?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Yes, sir. Thanks for the question. For us, the physical side, we have seen a lot of benefits. We are a little bit behind on the academic side relative to where the Army is. They got a fresh start before we stood up.

Where we are seeing benefit is when we have representation from the Navy in the classroom. Future Sailors want to learn from other Sailors. So it is not just about going out and getting contractors to maybe be your instructors versus being instructors. We see real benefit in using other Sailors, other people in the Navy that can talk to them not just about academic progress, but life in the Navy. We are seeing good benefits from that, sir.

Mr. KIM. Okay, great. Thank you. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you. Representative Gaetz?

Mr. GAETZ. Quality is down. Quantity is down. But there was a bright spot I noticed in recruiting. We had Academy Nights recently in my district. And a new question rose to the top that I hadn't really heard in a lot of previous years.

So many students came to me and said Congressman, which of these academies should I go to if I want to be in the Space Force? And I think we have really ignited a sense of imagination and interest in the Space Force. How long until I am able to offer these students a great Space Academy to attend?

Ms. KELLEY. Congressman, thank you so much for that question. We are certainly seeing a lot of interest in our own data.

We don't have a strategy right now that says stand up our own academy. We are leveraging the Air Force at the moment. But I really appreciate the comment about the interest that is out there. And I will take that back.

Mr. GAETZ. Yeah, I think we should devise a plan to at least see what metrics or when that might be necessary and to plan for it. And what we have learned particularly about this generation is that there has got to be a real interest in that particular mission, that particular thing, not just the overall brand. And so that is why I think it would be helpful.

I want to ask you some questions, General Glynn. What does it cost us to have a Marine Corps?

General GLYNN. You mean the overall --

Mr. GAETZ. Yeah, just ballpark.

General GLYNN. Just over \$50 billion a year.

Mr. GAETZ. Right. And how much of that do you manage in your portfolio?

General GLYNN. It is just about -- I am trying to do math in my head here. When you divide it, it is about \$4 or \$5 billion a year.

Mr. GAETZ. Okay. And what if we doubled it, what you were -- your portfolio? What if I gave you \$2 for every dollar you get now. What would be like some stuff you could do?

General GLYNN. There is a host of --

Mr. GAETZ. Exciting, isn't it?

General GLYNN. -- investments in the people that, yeah, I mean

--

Mr. GAETZ. Your probably weren't expecting that question from me.

General GLYNN. It is not an offer I get very frequently.

Mr. GAETZ. Right. But what is interesting is it is like the offer we have made to Ukraine is actually more than the cost of the United States Marine Corps. In this supplemental that we are about to vote on, there is \$61 billion for Ukraine, and it is about \$50 billion to have a Marine Corps.

So we could double our investment in the Marine Corps or we could vote for the supplemental. And I am just going through it. And there is stuff here that is really insulting.

The \$300 million for the anti-narcotics efforts in Ukraine. So we are about to proceed onto a bill that does nothing to protect Americans from the narcotics [narcos] in Mexico and the Northern Triangle and in this country. But we got \$300 million to go fight the narcos in Ukraine. And it doesn't end there.

Two hundred fifty million for the International Development Association. Now, I did not know what that was, but I knew it probably wasn't good. It turns out it is an arm of the World Bank. We are \$34 trillion in debt. We are on a glide path to \$50 trillion in debt, and we are borrowing money from China to give it to the World Bank.

And then I looked at where this money got disbursed. And it is places like Niger. Niger where we have Air Force, and we have Army servicemembers who are not getting their medicine, who are not able to get their troop rotations, who are not able to get their mail because there are not diplomatic overflights allowed so that we can care for our own servicemembers.

So in a bit, we will hear many of our colleagues stand up and talk about how important it is to stand with our allies. But not even all this money is going to our allies. So it is potentially being recycled through globalist money washing accounts to redistribute.

And that is really what this is about. What this supplemental is about. It is about creating a massive wad of unaccountable American cash. And when we have had the officials who are the Inspectors General over this Ukraine sitting before us at those chairs, they cannot attest that the end use monitoring is done and that this equipment is not falling into the wrong hands.

As a matter of fact, when we asked them those direct questions, they tell us, "Oh, we have to talk to you about that in a classified setting" not because the answers are particularly classified, but just because they are particularly embarrassing.

So I am incredibly proud of what you are doing at the Space Force. I hope we are able to ignite more young people toward that interest. If I didn't say so before, the \$50 billion we spent on the United States Marine Corps is a tremendous investment. I know that because we have got Marines who work in our office and who are about our district. And we are incredibly proud of them. I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Ms. Escobar.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Back to the focus of our hearing. Good afternoon. Thank you all so much for being here. Thank you for your service to our country. I am excited to get to questions that I have about the topic at hand.

Lieutenant General Stitt, I am deeply concerned about the Army's review and consideration of potential cuts to the Credentialing Assistance and the Tuition Assistance Program.

Key education benefits like these programs are a core element of the incentives for military service, which are ever more important amidst a challenging recruitment and retention environment.

Can you speak to the value of both the Credentialing Assistance and Tuition Assistance Programs? And while I know the Department of the Army has not yet issued decisions about any cuts to these programs, I really would like your input on how to reconcile any projected cuts in this recruiting and retention environment.

General STITT. Representative Escobar, these are, as you stated, highly successful programs, both the Tuition Assistance and the Credentialing Assistance. And they are important programs as we look at retaining and assessing individuals into our force. And that is why we need to make sure that we are ensuring the long-term sustainability of both of these great programs with left and right limits.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Agree. I would like to see a strategy for us, and Congress needs to focus on this, a strategy to ensure the longevity and investment in these programs. Thank you so much.

General Glynn, I really enjoyed our conversation earlier. And I would really love for you to expand a little bit and share with my colleagues a little bit about the Marine Corps Total Fitness Program. It was to me a great example of thinking through some of the challenges that our Active Duty servicemembers are facing and ways to address them in a meaningful way. So, please.

General GLYNN. Thank you for the opportunity and for your enthusiasm about the topic. Marine Corps Total Fitness is the approach that we have adopted over the course of the last year to take a holistic view of the wellness of Marines and frankly their families. And so it is the intentional integration of four domains; mental, spiritual, social, and physical and ensuring that every offering that we have doesn't just go after one domain but offers all four so that folks are building a reservoir of wellness, and they are prepared for the challenges of life, in particular military life.

Our early efforts so far are very promising. And they get directly at many of the destructive behaviors that we have discussed with this subcommittee in the past.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you so much. I think that your approach mirrors some of what I have seen in some of the other Branches. But really I am looking forward to over the long term seeing what impact is and how helpful it is.

I had the opportunity to serve on the Quality of Life Panel that some of my colleagues here on this dais also participated in. And we did some really work, work that I am excited about, hopefully getting out of the Congress to the President's desk and implementing.

But even if we do all of those things, we still have to take care of the individual and the challenges that each individual and their families face.

What I would like to hear from some of our other witnesses really is how each Branch -- we have got very -- actually, we will hear from Lieutenant General Stitt how the Army is handling this same issue. I wish we had time for everyone to respond. This is an important topic to me.

General STITT. We take a similar approach with holistic health and fitness and working on our prevention across the force, going anywhere from providing at the lowest level, linking Soldiers up and doing, you know, self-care wellness checks across the force.

You know, at Fort Riley and in Alaska, they have mandated 100-day wellness checks and not just with a provider, but with a military family life consultant. Educating and informing families on the resources that are available across our posts, camps, and stations to really just connect and ensure that our Soldiers understand that they have leaders in place that want to care for them.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you. I am out of time. I appreciate all of you. I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Representative Mills.

Mr. MILLS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for being here today.

I want to touch on a topic that I have mentioned in the past because it is really important for us with regards not just retention but ensuring that our priorities are set in the right way.

As a military veteran myself, our priorities in the military when I was in the U.S. Army was increase lethality, readiness, and being properly equipped.

I still to this day think that we should be focused on those three topics to ensure that we are ready for any of our adversarial nations regardless of the battlefield and regardless of the scenario.

I want to give a special "Oorah" to our Marine General here. You guys have done an amazing job on your recruitment efforts to maintain not only retention but recruiting the best and brightest when it comes to the Marine Corps. So I want to thank you for that. And I hope that we can recruitment efforts up in the remaining Armed Service groups so that we can also meet those challenges and not reduce our standards as we have recently seen with the Navy where we are actually even waiving the ability for a diploma in the high school, I believe, is now the requirement.

But as I talk about that, I want to get something that is really kind of near and dear. Does either of you across your Services know how many servicemembers were unconstitutionally pushed out of the military due to the forced Coronavirus [COVID] vaccine requirements? By all means, please jump right in.

Ms. KELLEY. For the Space Force, none.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, I am concerned about the adjective you used with unconstitutionally so.

Mr. MILLS. It is my own opinion. But I will tell you, I will make it easy for your Vice Admiral. How many people were pushed out of the Navy due to the actual refusal of taking the COVID vaccination?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. I believe we had 1,878 separations.

Mr. MILLS. Got you. That is challenging. Sir, General Stitt?

General STITT. The Representative knows I would like to take that question for the record. I don't know the exact number off the top of my head.

Mr. MILLS. Understood. Thank you, sir. General Glynn?

General GLYNN. Sir, we achieved a greater than 97 percent vaccination rate. During that period, we had about 3,700 that left the service.

Mr. MILLS. Now, would it shock any of you to know that those who had applied for religious or medical freedom exemptions that their entire documentation, granted, through the military process, through the federal government, through review of their actual submissions, that their requirements were actually being seen, adjudicated, and decisions made within less than five minutes of each application?

General MILLER. I would be surprised with that. That is not how the Air Force did it.

Mr. MILLS. The Department of Defense Inspector General reported on average it took less than five minutes to adjudicate processes, service-wide, for those who were seeking certain military medical or religious exemptions, which was shocking to me because I work in the federal government, so I know we are not that efficient.

But my issue with this is that I don't think that permitted the necessary timeline when you think about what would actually have to be requested because they would have had to have gone to their priest to their -- whichever their religious, like, figure was that they were actually looking at as well as for maybe even in their own physician or other doctors that would have been able to verify these types of things.

So I would ask that each of you look at the process or procedures that are being utilized to ensure that the necessary adjudication is actually being done for those who are actually seeking that.

In looking at additional information, I would like to ask and determine, can any of you elaborate on why anyone removed from the military for refusing the untested vaccine would be given less than honorable discharge?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, I can speak for the Navy. Nobody that left the Navy was given anything other than an honorable discharge.

Mr. MILLS. They weren't given the general or a Category 3 [AE2] for their reenlistment?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. The characterization was honorable. I will have to take the question for the record on the Reenlistment Code [RE code] and get back to you.

Mr. MILLS. Because a general is still different than an Honorable as we all know, especially when it comes to your Reenlistment Status, correct?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Yes, sir, it is. But everybody who left the United States Navy received an honorable discharge. I will have to verify the RE code just to be sure.

General MILLER. For those, though that we have -- so all of those that left from the Air Force, we have personally submitted a letter to them saying, you know, gave them the process to come back. And of all of the ones that have come back, we have boarded 98. Ninety-eight have been approved to come back, you know, with an honorable.

Mr. MILLS. General Stitt or General Glynn, would you guys like to reply to that at all or?

General GLYNN. A similar process as Representative Mills. We followed the DOD guidance and sent individual Soldiers a letter instructing them how to come back, utilizing their local recruiter in

pursuing return via the Army Board of Correction for Military Review.

Mr. MILLS. Well, I thank you. My time has expired. But I will say that one of the things that I truly believe is that those who, in my vision and my view, was unconstitutionally prejudicial by our military for these vaccines should be reinstated, full back pay, full benefits, and be given the chance to serve the United States military and not the President's agenda or any other. And so, with that, I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. BANKS. Ms. Tokuda.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Based on the last reports we have available, fiscal year 2022, there were 8,940 reports of sexual assault and a prevalence rate, which you know is the estimate, of how many sexual assaults occurred in the military was at 36,000.

When we take a look at it by different service Branches, in 2022 Air Force saw a 13 percent increase, Navy saw a 9 percent increase, Marine Corps 3.6, and Army, while a decrease of 9 percent, had a prior year's total of a massive 26 percent rise in reported sexual assault.

My question for you folks today is how does sexual assault in your Branches at these levels undermine our overall readiness and quite frankly impact our ability to recruit and retain servicemembers? Anyone can start.

General STITT. Representative Tokuda, good afternoon. We take sexual assault very seriously and started with the Office of the Special Trial Counsel now that we have implemented so that those sexual assault cases are now being prosecuted through that office and then leveraging through the Department of Defense the integrated prevention assistance groups where we are facilitating at individual posts, camps, and stations a Commander's ability to see themselves through greater data collection, integration with local law enforcement, Criminal Investigation Division [CID] on post because every post, camp, and station is different and some of the risk factors around post, camp, or station in one location are going to be different than another.

So this Integrated Prevention Advisory Group [I-PAG] enables that Commander to get a better understanding of their environment. And then that respective Commander and the leadership there can flex those resources and programs to meet those challenges.

Ms. TOKUDA. I guess I would just like a simple answer for that and appreciate -- we will talk about the Special Trial Counsels [STCs] a little bit later on. But bottom line, do you think sexual assault in your branch impacts your ability to be ready and prepared to fight when we need to and does this impact recruitment and retention? It can be a simple yes or no answer.

General STITT. Representative Tokuda, any behavior that detracts from our ability to perform our warfighting mission infringes upon readiness.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Ma'am, a similar answer for the Navy. Absolutely, sexual assault, any harmful behavior destroys unit cohesion and affects the mission. Yes, ma'am. General Glynn. I think we all agree that sexual assault is a crime that plagues, you know,

many organizations, and it's an issue across the nation, not just for uniform Services but as it directly contributes to the readiness of a unit.

General MILLER. I would concur with that. Additionally in order to defend the Constitution, we have to have trust in one another. And if we can't trust the individuals that are in our formation, it absolutely impacts readiness.

Ms. KELLEY. Ma'am, I would concur with my colleagues.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you. And I agree what was just said, I believe, by Lieutenant General Glynn there that yes, sexual assault plagues many organizations. But at a prevalence rate this high for an institution that is entrusted with the safeguarding of our national security, these are absolutely unacceptable. These absolutely impact our readiness and quite frankly undermine every single effort you folks have put forth and talked about today to recruit and retain the very best to defend our country, to keep our families safe.

I know I am running short on time, but I did, first of all, want to commend Secretary Austin and his leadership for prioritizing sexual assault prevention since we have seen sadly such drastic increases in numbers of assault and responding by establishing the Office of the Special Trial Counsels.

Earlier today, I actually had a meeting with a number of survivors of sexual assault who experienced sexual assault during their time in uniform. And they talked to me about what it was like to live through that experience and quite frankly what it has been like after and what they would like to see done.

So my question really, and you can provide more answers later, is about how you have been able to implement these special trial counsels and quite frankly build up a primary prevention and sexual response workforce as well that is critical as a secondary part to try to prevent these things from happening.

But given that this was a landmark moment in history in terms of military justice systems, now that we are few months in, I believe you started at the beginning of this year in terms of these offices becoming fully functional, operational, I would like to get a sense of the early impacts.

So going through the branches, perhaps you can submit this later since I am running out of time, what are some earlier takeaways about the Offices of the Special Trial Counsel that are important for this committee to know? What have been the challenges or successes? What kind of metrics and methods are you using to measure the success and impact of the Office of the Special Trial Counsel?

And in terms of initial caseloads, do you have sufficient staffing in each of your Offices of Special Trial Counsel? And in particular, I would like to know how we are moving more of those restricted reports to unrestricted reports so people can get the help that they need.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 107.]

Thank you. I am out of time. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. BANKS. General Bergman.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin with a historical bit of data on Marine Corps budgeting. In 1972 when the fiscal year ended on June 30, we were both pleased to return money to the Department of Defense from our Marine Corps budget but at the same time fly unnecessary flight hours to burn gas so we could get our allotment. So there is a certain dichotomy there that doesn't quite fit.

I appreciate that we hopefully continue to set a standard in warfighting. And I am referring to myself as a marine here. But I know that we all, all of you at the table, fight the war in a different uniform and a different mission but with the same passion for our national defense and our defense of freedoms.

Lieutenant General Stitt, you testified that the Army developed two new military occupational specialties, 420-T talent acquisition technician, and 42-T, talent acquisition specialist. And I guess the 420-T is going to be a Warrant Officer, did I get that right?

General STITT. That is correct, Representative.

Mr. BERGMAN. Will they have promotion opportunities all the way through Chief Warrant Officer 5 [CW05]?

General STITT. That is correct.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. So as you develop this talent acquisition team, you know, you are going to do a rigorous selection and training process to recruit interested young Americans. These folks are going to be career recruiters?

General STITT. That is correct.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. So how does the Army plan to incentivize these competitively selected and skilled talent acquisition technicians and talent acquisition specialists to stay in the Army past an initial enlistment?

General STITT. Right now, we are in the developmental stages for MOS 42-T and with the Enlisted MOS. Within the Warrant Officer's specialty, we are looking at continuity pay that already exists within the force for our Warrant Officers but also looking at potential non-monetary incentives such as stability at a location of choice. We are still looking at all our options, Representative.

Mr. BERGMAN. What I would like to -- just take for the record, as you develop the long-term incentives, because when you think about it, it is one thing to recruit someone, whether it be Officer or Enlisted, to an initial contract, it is a whole different set of goals, if you will, when it comes to Firearms Technical Assistance Project [FTAP], Select Train Educate Promote [STEP] towards a, you know, 20 plus year career.

So I would just like to see as the Army develops just your metrics to make sure your incentives work. Because we can put them out, but if we do not then check to see if they, you know, are still on target, if you will, then what good were they? Okay.

Lieutenant General Glynn, you stated that the Marine Corps made its recruiting mission in fiscal year 2023 and is currently on track to meet it again this fiscal year. How has the structure and role of the MCRC, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, ensured the Marine Corps makes its recruiting mission?

General GLYNN. Congressman, thanks for that question and to your opening comment about the money and the budget, I mean, you are well aware we had the first clean audit in the history of

any military service. So we are pretty proud of knowing where every dollar goes to.

In the case of MCRC, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, it continues to be a very adaptive and dynamic organization constantly looking at where it is. Our commitment remains the same, to be in every ZIP Code, in every state, in every territory of the nation but ensuring that we are located where we need to be to ensure that we have the messaging, and we have the contact with young and men and women who might be inclined, but are uninformed, about the future military service and the future of service in a Marine Corps uniform.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. I see I got 26 seconds left. What would you guess the percentage of your Marines, both Officer and Enlisted, who are really excited about going to be recruiters as opposed to staying in a deployable unit?

General GLYNN. I would say it is not the majority.

Mr. BERGMAN. It is small. That is right. That is okay. You said -- that is okay. I don't want it to be a trick question here.

General GLYNN. Yes, sir.

Mr. BERGMAN. We need to send the best to the recruiting field to recruit the best so we can train them to fight. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Representative Horsford.

Mr. HORSFORD. Thank you, Chairman Banks and Ranking Member Kim for the hearing. My district in Nevada covers almost 50,000 square miles. It includes both one of the fastest growing housing markets in the country and in rural communities.

It is also home to Nellis Air Force Base with more than 11,000 military members that must compete for critical services in a rapidly growing district and at Creech Air Force base, also in my district, which has 3,500 servicemembers who lack access to critical services at their duty location and must travel 100 miles a day in order to access child care, military housing, and health care services.

Access to safe, secure, and affordable housing is a concern of many of our constituents. As recruits consider military service, the availability and affordability of adequate housing is a concern.

Nellis Air Force Base is among the installations with the highest levels of unmet housing need. This time last year, that unmet housing need meant that young Airmen were being released into off base community housing after 11 months. It concerns me that since then the issue has only worsened with Airmen now being released after only eight months.

Lieutenant General Miller, I don't have to tell you that eight months is very short of the Air Force's requirement of 36 months' time in service. So I will ask you the same question I asked Secretary Kendall and General Allvin earlier today, but I want to ask you, can you speak to the importance of ensuring adequate housing availability for both recruitment and retention of military members and what is currently being done to address the needs of our young unaccompanied Airmen at installations such as Nellis?

General MILLER. Yes, Congressman, thank you. And I will tell you that housing is absolutely a readiness issue. It is a quality of

life that we have to make sure that we have safe and quality housing.

So at Nellis in particular, we just did a \$4.5 million dorm renovation. We also have two projects coming up for Military Construction [MILCON] that are in design to do that. We are partnering with the community to find additional housing.

We know that Creech is a continual challenge because of the distance. And so we are looking at all sorts of opportunities to get child care out there, do bussing. So that is a big focus item for us.

Mr. HORSFORD. Okay. Well, at the Nellis issue and those investments, I am proud to have worked with this committee to secure. The problem is that is to replace other housing that is coming off.

General MILLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. HORSFORD. So it is not really in addition to, it is in place of. And so we really need a larger commitment to housing in these unmet areas if we are going to address the recruitment and retention area issue.

On the Creech side of the equation, I look forward to partnering with you. I have identified a number of opportunities in partnership with the local YMCA and other child care providers in and near Creech Air Force Base.

Let me turn to another issue around health care, which is also a critical piece of the support that we need to provide to military members throughout their careers.

For members at Creech Air Force Base, many Airmen must travel to Nellis Air Force Base, as I said, to receive specialty health care resulting in months long wait times and increased cost. Additionally, the transition of the Services' health care to the Defense Health Agency [DHA] has resulted in many members having increased concerns with their access to medical care.

So to the panel, can you speak to the impact that the changes to the military health care system are having on our ability to recruit and retain top talent?

General STITT. Representative Horsford, I think we are in a very competitive environment with a nationwide shortage of providers. So in conjunction with the Office of our Surgeon General and DHA, you know, we are taking on this challenge. It is very serious. And we acknowledge absolutely we need to take care of our Soldiers and families and continue to work forward on this.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, I travel often in my role. And this is, you know, darn near the number one concern I hear from family members. So similar to our Army counterpart, our surgeon general works closely with DHA. As Secretary of the Navy [SECNAV] testified yesterday, we are willing to take risks in the short term with the operational medical forces as we cover down with DHA to make sure we are, you know, addressing these things appropriately. But, you know, underinvestment and under-execution need to be addressed, and we look forward to moving out together with DHA.

Mr. HORSFORD. I know we are out of time. I want to thank our witnesses for being here. These are critically important issues. Thank you for your service. And I look forward to having my office follow-up with you. With that, I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Representative Finstad.

Mr. FINSTAD. Thank you, Chairman Banks, and thank you to our witnesses for your service and for being here today.

Personnel and recruiting are dynamic issues. Today's generation is not like the generation of World War II. This is okay. As a father of seven children under the age of 20, I get it. And it doesn't mean that there aren't future heroes and noble public servants in today's youth.

Generations change, and as they will, we must change our recruiting methods to ensure that military service remains a tangible and viable option not solely an abstract one.

So let me be clear. Our individual servicemembers are the most important collective part of the U.S. military. This importance begins with their recruitment and continues through their civic engagement as veterans.

Before we consider all the fancy gadgets within modernization portfolios, we must consider the former, current, and future groups of servicemembers that will defend the American way of life. Military family health and wellness equals enhanced military readiness. And I look forward to supporting the quality of life focus in the fiscal year 2025 NDAA.

So let's talk recruitment for a little bit here. The Air Force has managed to improve their recruiting situation while the Army and Navy continue to struggle despite no lack of effort.

The Marine Corps, to its credit, appears to consistently make its recruiting mission. So at the risk of a cage match fight breaking out between all of you, I want to learn from this. And I want us to be able to hear the secret sauce of success here.

So, Lieutenant General Miller and Lieutenant General Glynn, what has the Air Force done to improve its recruiting success and what are the tenets of the Marine Corps' success in recruiting?

General MILLER. Yes, Congressman, thank you. We have looked internally, and we looked at barriers that we were putting on restraining ourselves from an adequate recruiting pool. So we looked at things such as our tattoo policy was incredibly stringent. And we hadn't needed to change up until this point. And so we looked into that and, you know, what was reasonable.

Additionally, our body composition was higher than it -- I mean, it was relatively low. So we just increased that to make sure that we were still maintaining DOD standards. And we looked at driver's license. We had restricted many career fields from -- because they had to have a driver's license and so all of those internal barriers. Not lowering standards, we did not lower standards. But we just made those small policy changes, we were able to increase our pool of applicants.

And additionally, you know, we had a campaign, you know, it's the -- last year, I think, you know, if you were going to go into the service, you weren't going to be paid enough. You were going to be sexually assaulted. All of these negative things. We needed to change that. Because if you look at our retention numbers, if you come into the service, our retention numbers are incredibly high.

So we have been working on all facets of that, sir.

General GLYNN. Congressman, thanks for the opportunity to comment on it. I wouldn't say that there is one single item that is, you know, the special sauce as you alluded to. But I would say our

commitment over years first and foremost has been in the quality of Marine that we put out there as a representative of our Corps and to ensure that that individual is representative to the part of the nation ZIP Code, as I alluded to earlier, that young men and women can possibly see themselves in becoming a United States Marine. That would be the first thing.

The second thing is, our Commandants over the years, and I have been on recruiting several times, have been fully committed to ensuring that those that volunteer, go on recruiting duty, and succeed are recognized, rewarded, promoted, you know, whatever tangible and intangible ways that are required. So there are clear and compelling reasons to go and be a recruiter and do well as a recruiter.

The last thing I would say is that through our recruiters, we try to listen to young folks like the seven young folks you alluded to. What appeals to them? And over and over again, it was in my opening statement, a desire to serve something bigger than themselves. And so we challenge them with the opportunity to earn the title Marine and go on and take that unique title to apply in unique areas of the world and unique circumstances and have the memories of a lifetime is why I continue to do it.

Mr. FINSTAD. That is great. And I appreciate that. And I will just say again, as a father of seven, clarity of mission is always something that is very crucial to motivating at least my seven. When they can firmly believe in what I am putting in front of them, I get amazing results. And so I appreciate hearing that from you.

Maybe just -- I guess my time is up here. But I would just say thank you again, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you, specifically around recruiting and quality of life issues as we move to the NDAA process. Thank you.

Mr. BANKS. Representative Alford.

Mr. ALFORD. Thank you so much, Chair and Ranking Member Kim, and our witnesses today for being here. As a member with two premier defense installations in our district, Fort Leonard and Whiteman Air Force Base, I care deeply about the servicemembers' personnel issues. And that is why I am on the subcommittee.

This Congress, I was honored to sit on the Quality of Life Panel and sign the recommendations designed to improve the standard of living for our servicemembers, all of which will be in the National Defense Authorization Act and will pass.

I am very excited for these. I believe the recommendation for a 15 percent pay raise for Junior Enlisted will be a significant step in the right direction, especially for retention efforts. But there is much that we can do in Congress and the Department of Defense needs to do to address the challenges facing our fighting force today.

In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Defense failed to meet its recruiting goal by 41,000 recruits. It is a huge shortfall. It includes industrial base procurement lethargy and backlogs as well as credibly deterring hostile competitors in multiple regions across the globe, all sorts of factors that we need to act upon.

I kind of want to have a philosophical discussion. And I know we are probably not in the business of theorizing. But Lieutenant General Stitt, I know that only 9 percent of America's young people

right now have any interest in joining the military. Some military families are actually discouraging their children and grandchildren from joining, which is a very sad thing. Why do you think that is, and what is the Army doing to try to change that?

General STITT. Representative Alford, I think what we are seeing this year to date is great progress within recruiting. And we remain cautiously optimistic today that we will achieve our fiscal year 2024 mission of 55,000 sessions into the active component and have 5,000 individuals contracted into our delayed entry program for next year.

We have undertaken a significant overhaul of our recruiters and our recruiting workforce and our recruiting structure, looking at who we recruit, how we recruit, and with whom are we doing our recruiting? And when we talk about who we recruit, we look at the totality of the United States labor market. Let's move beyond just having a conversation with a potential applicant who is in high school but looking at the labor force right now where the students in high school about 80 percent are graduating from high school and going on to a college or university or a two-year school.

So upscaling and rescaling our recruiting workforce to not only engage high schoolers but engage those who have complete -- are attending college but may not complete. And then also engaging others that are in the workforce today but may be looking for other options. How we recruit, utilizing, and connecting with America today and where they live in the digital sphere, utilizing digital job boards; LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor, and piloting and innovating across the nation, starting small, learning, collecting data and then moving on, taking those lessons learned.

And then with whom we are recruiting, moving away from a borrowed military manpower situation where we are disrupting cohesion and readiness to identify a sergeant of infantry to go serve temporarily as a recruiter but creating a professionalized workforce across the nation that can start to thin the lines and send those other non-commissioned Officers back in to do the jobs across the force and enhance our readiness.

Mr. ALFORD. Missions are becoming more technical. The skills needed are different than they were 20, 30 years ago. Do you see a time, Lieutenant General Stitt, where basic training as we know it is no longer needed for many of the people we are trying to get into the military, casting a wider net to be able to get some of these people in to do specific jobs, not firing, not fighting on the front lines necessarily, but to operate machinery and equipment that is more technical in nature?

General STITT. What we are seeing right now, Representative Alford, particularly within the Officer Corps is utilization of authorities from the 2019 NDAA for direct accession and into the service.

We have brought in, off the top of my head, around 16 individuals to serve in our branches as Cyber Officers. So we are utilizing the authorities to go out and continue to evolve and adapt our recruiting.

Mr. ALFORD. Thank you. I am out of time. Thank you so much again for being here, and I yield back.

Mr. BANKS. Representative Waltz.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all to our witnesses for your service. And we are in, as I think you have heard loud and clear from the committee today, and I know that all of your service secretaries and chiefs are focused on this, but we are in an absolute recruiting crisis.

And what we have here, and I don't know if you can read it, but this was through the end of November. It is a quarter old. But basically the Services were making their numbers, not Army or Navy. I know that we have had some improvement, Army, in Quarter 2[Q2] or the first quarter of this calendar year.

But I think it is important for everybody watching, listening to appreciate that even if you make those numbers, and that is an if still, we will see. We are not digging out of the hole, right? I mean, we have got now the smallest Army since World War II.

And so the first question I would like you to talk about, what does it take not just to hit the numbers, but then how do we dig out of that trough that we found ourselves in in the last two years? And keep in mind, we are stating, Mr. Chairman, that this Congress prevented the expulsion of another 20,000 after going down 45,000 for a vaccine that doesn't stop the spread, which made it in, I think, many people's view then a personal health decision. So thank God we didn't go that far. But talk to me about how we dig out of the hole.

What do you need to exceed to get us out in let's say the next three years, 2027 being pretty important since Chairman Xi told his military to be ready to go by then? I think we need to be ready to go by then. How do we dig out of the hole?

I will go to you, General Stitt. You have got the biggest one to dig out of.

General STITT. Representative Waltz, we didn't arrive at these recruiting challenges overnight. We are not going to dig ourselves out of the hole overnight. As I just stated, our transformation efforts across United States Army Recruiting Command [USAREC], our direct support of United States Army Recruiting Command efforts from the totality of the Army, Active Duty operational formations supporting recruiting efforts around the country. The returns that we are seeing from be all you can be --

Mr. WALTZ. A great ad during March Madness by the way. I think you have a lot more recruits that want to jump out of planes and kick in doors and do bad things to bad guys responding to that, I hope, than the previous ads we have had, which I still don't know why we had those. But anyway, nice correction.

General STITT. The Coach Krzyzewski ad is showing very favorable returns.

Mr. WALTZ. But talk to me, I mean, just in the time I have remaining, we have to dig out of the last couple of years not just break even. So let's talk about exceeding goals to make up for the hole that we are in. So in three years, you have to have, what, 10, 15,000 on top of your current goal? Is that roughly right?

General STITT. We would estimate that we would need somewhere -- you know, depending on where we finish in 2024, 2025, we would like to get us back up to around 470,000 by the end of the program.

Mr. WALTZ. Navy, your Chief of Naval Operations [CNO] is, I think, being very candid, and I appreciate it, that you are what, 18,000 short he just said in terms of at sea needs and about 4,000 short here on shore. The Army is having great success with a prep course pre-basic training. Talk to me about what Navy is doing to emulate that. And I know that sounds like a Go Army, Beat Navy kind of question. It is not.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. No.

Mr. WALTZ. But how can we emulate success.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. You know, not too proud not to, you know, take lessons and learn them from my Army friends.

Mr. WALTZ. Right.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Sir, to your point about the numbers. CNO and I share your concerns, which is why you see our recruiting mission for this year as 40,600. We took what we missed last year and added it to what we need to do this year, partially, because we recognize it's not just about end strength. It is about work requirements in the fleet that we need to maintain so we can build out of that trough.

So I think you can expect us to have similar missions in the years to come as we build up that work requirement and eventually, you know, outnumber just the end strength. And I am going through my Navy friends and hopefully this body asking for more end strength to come back because that is the glide slope that we are on.

So your point about numbers, we are 2,500 recruits ahead of where we were at this time last year.

Mr. WALTZ. Mm-hmm.

Admiral CHEESEMAN. And in fiscal year 2023, while did miss mission, we were 6,000 recruits better than we were the year before. So we are trending in the right direction.

Mr. WALTZ. Mr. Chairman, if I could just ask one more. I think I am the end. General Miller, I asked this question of your secretary. You are the only service that requested with a budget request a decline in junior ROTC. I think we would all agree, and your Service chiefs have all agreed, not only do you get a recruit out of high school ROTC, you get a better citizen. And, oh, by the way, Senator Wicker and I worked to increase the authorization up to 4,000. So why the decline if we are in the midst of a recruiting crisis?

General MILLER. I don't know why the decline in the Junior ROTC. But I would say that as a citizens program, I think they are fantastic because they treat --

Mr. WALTZ. And we are also -- thank you. I appreciate that on the record. We are also working to decrease the minimum numbers.

General MILLER. That is right.

Mr. WALTZ. We have Junior ROTC departments in high schools, most of them in minority parts of the country, minority/majority high schools with say 96, 97 cadets. But the requirement is 100.

General MILLER. Right.

Mr. WALTZ. So they are on a probation list. We are working to reduce that. Is there anyone that would oppose that? Okay. I will take that as a no.

General STITT. No, sir.

General MILLER. No, sir.

Mr. WALTZ. Okay. No, great.

General MILLER. Mm-hmm.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the indulgence.

Mr. BANKS. I want to thank all of our witnesses again for your service and for being here with us today to talk about these important issues.

I hope that you will take back some of the issues that we discussed today to your Service Chiefs and discuss them, talk about concrete actions that we need to take to mitigate the problems that we face when it comes to recruitment and other issues.

I appreciate all of you being here today. With no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:49 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

APRIL 17, 2024

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 17, 2024

**Statement of
Chairman Jim Banks
Military Department Personnel Chiefs;
Personnel Posture
Military Personnel Subcommittee
April 17, 2024**

The subcommittee will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that the chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Without objection, so ordered.

I want to welcome everyone to this hearing of the Military Personnel subcommittee.

take the issues we have identified and discussed here today back to your Service Chiefs and let them know we will be looking for the concrete actions they intend to take to mitigate the problems we have identified in this hearing and how they intend to fix them.

With that, there being no further business, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

Today's hearing is focused on the personnel policy makers...who are charged with developing the policies, guidance and programs that affect recruiting, accessions, assignments, benefits, career progression, and much more...

And it's no small secret that policies—especially personnel policies—drive military culture. Strategic leaders in their efforts to form a shared belief system risk substituting continuous oversight with policy and guidance on how to *think, feel, and behave*.

And some of the most culturally transformative guidance and policies in the military services over the last decade have been in the personnel arena, most notably: Diversity,

Equity, Inclusion (DEI). For more than 10 years former President Obama and President Biden, have issued Executive Orders establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote Diversity and Inclusion.

Navigating these policies is no small task, especially considering the military personnel system you are tasked with running is SUPPOSED to be based on MERIT, NOT social engineering.

I am concerned that policies you must implement not only contradict the military culture necessary to ensure an effective fighting force, but that the cultural upheaval this administration is pushing on DOD and the

military services may continue to lead to recruiting and retention problems.

For example, DEI. It is no secret that the backlash to DEI policies has been strong. Last week, Axios quoted Johnny Taylor, president of the Society for Human Resource Management: [QUOTE] “The backlash [to DEI] is real. And I mean, in ways that I’ve actually never seen it before.”

And yet even as Americans have pushed back, the Department of Defense continues its focus on DEI. This has an impact on recruiting and retention. This has an impact on potential service members seeing their future success as dependent on their race or gender, not merit.

We are not going to end our recruiting crisis by chipping away at merit-based personnel actions with requirements and directives to take, for example, gender into consideration, as Lieutenant General Burt advocated for when addressing state LGBTQ laws: [QUOTE] “If the good match for a job does not feel safe being themselves and performing at their highest potential at a given location, or if their family could be denied critical health care due to the laws in that state, I am compelled to consider a different candidate, and, perhaps, less qualified.”

The bottom line is, I am concerned. Especially, that this administration and the

military services are dismissing the cultural changes these personnel policies are forcing on the military without considering their effects on recruiting. It may just be correlation that recruiting has struggled since the focus on DEI as a national security priority; but I'm deeply skeptical of that. This needs to be investigated.

But now, I want to thank our witnesses for being with us today:

Lieutenant General Douglas F. Stitt
US Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

Vice Admiral Richard (pronounced "Cheese-min") Cheeseman Jr.
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Personnel

Lieutenant General Caroline Miller

Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and
Personnel, US Air Force

Lieutenant General James Glynn (Glin)

Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve
Affairs, U.S Marine Corps

Katharine Kelley, SES

Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human
Capital

Before hearing from our witnesses, let me
offer Ranking Member Kim an opportunity to
make any opening remarks.

Ranking Member Kim:

[Following Ranking Member Kim's Remarks]

Thank you, Mr. Kim.

Each witness will have the opportunity to present his or her testimony, and each Member will have an opportunity to question the witnesses for five minutes. We respectfully ask the witnesses to summarize their testimony in five minutes or less. Your written comments and statements will be made part of the hearing record.

With that, Lieutenant General Stitt, you may
make your opening statement.

[after Lt Gen Stitt is finished]

Vice Admiral Cheeseman; then
Lieutenant General Miller; then
Lieutenant General Glynn; then
Ms. Kelley;

[After witnesses and questions have concluded]

I would like to thank all our witnesses again
for their service and for providing testimony this
afternoon. I would close by requesting that you

take the issues we have identified and discussed here today back to your Service Chiefs and let them know we will be looking for the concrete actions they intend to take to mitigate the problems we have identified in this hearing and how they intend to fix them.

With that, there being no further business, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel Holds Hearing on Military Department Personnel

April 14th, 2024

REP. ANDY KIM:

Thank you, chairman. Thank you all for joining. Without soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and guardians, we couldn't man military weapons systems, deliver humanitarian assistance or effectively respond to security challenges around the globe. I've read your testimonies and there is no doubt you are all concerned about a number of issues, including young people's decreasing propensity to serve, their lack of connection to the value of military service.

And that affects also the changing recruitment landscape that's out there that the chairman and I have been grappling with the rest of the members on this committee. I share these concerns and would add that this is why I support taking the steps necessary to widen the pool of applicants we can draw from for our all-volunteer force.

I'm encouraged by the prep courses that the army and navy have established to help potential recruits, overcome physical fitness barriers into service and meet or exceed service and Department of Defense physical requirements. I'm encouraged by how the services are employing innovative tools to increase the impact and effectiveness of the recruiter force, from the army's creation of a recruiter military career track to ensure that those who serve as first line ambassadors in schools and communities across the country are well prepared, to the Navy's Recruiting Operations Center, which now monitors recruiting efforts in real-time, and the Air Force's barriers to service review of internal policies, which resulted in an additional 6,800 people being eligible to serve as airmen.

House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel Holds Hearing on Military Department Personnel

April 14th, 2024

These are just a few examples of how you are all trying to think out of the box to encourage military service among our youth. Another important factor is ensuring we have the force we need is to pay attention to the quality of life needs of service members and their families. I'm excited that myself and many others on this subcommittee have been a part of the quality of life panel that released its report and recommendations last week.

By focusing our efforts on solutions to address pay and compensation, we will make sure service members and their families have enough money to put food on the table. I also, I often hear from many service members in my district who are stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst about how they struggle to get access to the medical and childcare that they need.

These are issues that I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can agree, need to be addressed. As I've said before, we ask our service members to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, which they voluntarily do day-in and day-out, which means that we owe it to them and their families to do everything we can to ensure that they have all that they need when they need it. Mr. chairman, thank you for having this hearing today, so we can discuss many of the important issues of personnel policies on the lives of our service members.

And thank you to the witnesses again for being here and I yield back the balance of my time.

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DOUGLAS F. STITT
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1
UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SECOND SESSION, 118TH CONGRESS

ON ARMY ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

APRIL 17, 2024

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, distinguished members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

Our Army will remain the most effective fighting force in this fluid and ambiguous environment through continuous transformation. To maintain this competitive edge, our organizations, materials, and doctrine must be agile and adaptive to serve our force. As we change our force structure to grow new capabilities to support the joint force in Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO), we are transforming how we recruit and invest in our people, the most substantial overhaul in Army history. We are building the Army of the future, mindful that our personnel serve as its bedrock. Investing in our people is paramount to guaranteeing the readiness of the Army. The Army's People Enterprise is postured to support the Army objectives within a Multi-Domain Operations framework to win our nation's wars. Moreover, enhancing Soldiers' capacity to grasp and respond to evolving circumstances heightens their effectiveness, accuracy, and resilience. Our primary focus remains on selecting individuals best suited to serve our nation and guaranteeing the well-being of our Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Families.

Continuous Transformation

Army transformation is well underway, but we must accelerate and intensify our efforts. We must transform our capabilities, force structure, and recruiting enterprise. We must deliver ready combat formations and take care of our people, ensuring the quality of life for our Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Families. The Army is taking active measures to overcome recruiting challenges without compromising on our standards for high quality soldiers. We continue to develop and implement innovative ideas to invest in America's youth, and attract high quality recruits.

Transforming our Force Structure

The Army is transforming our force structure to incorporate new capabilities and refocus on LSCO. The legacy structure from the past two decades focused on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations and maintained authorizations to

accommodate 494,000 Soldiers. Our transformation will reduce the unfilled and excess positions and create space for new capabilities supporting LSCO in a multi-domain environment. The success of this restructure will rely on the Army's ability to gradually increase end strength from the current 445,000 Soldiers to 470,000 by FY29 to meet the requirements of the future force. This transformation includes a reduction of 32,000 authorizations across the force structure and an addition of 7,500 new authorizations, leading to a net decrease of about 24,000 authorizations. The overall reduction in authorizations will more closely align the structure to the authorized end strength to improve the readiness of formations by ensuring they are appropriately filled, while increasing their capabilities. New additions to the force structure will bring advanced capabilities to meet current requirements and ensure that we maintain overmatch against adversaries in the future.

Recruiting Transformation

To build these advanced capabilities and new formations that will ensure we maintain overmatch against adversaries, the Army is transforming how we recruit. This is essential to overcome the greatest existential threat to the All-Volunteer Force. Fixing recruiting is a "no-fail" mission. In October 2023, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army announced a significant transformation of the Army's Recruiting Enterprise. This effort to enhance how the Army recruits for a transforming Army is focused on 5 lines of effort to be successful.

1. Transform how the Army prospects.

Because the labor market has changed fundamentally since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973, the Army will expand its focus beyond recent high school graduates. Today's high school seniors comprise more than 50 percent of our annual contracts, however, they represent only 15-20 percent of the larger prospect pool from which we could recruit. Accordingly, in addition to the high school market, we need to attract and hire Americans in the college market or those already out in the job market. The Army leadership has set a goal of at least a third of the Army's newest soldiers to have more than a high school degree by 2028, compared to 20 percent today.

2. Transform the Army's recruiting workforce.

The labor market is increasingly competitive, and we recognize we have technical gaps among our recruiting workforce. As a result, the Army developed two new MOS's: 420T and 42T; Talent Acquisition Technician and Talent Acquisition Specialist to better equip recruiters with skills and tools to achieve success. We are developing the Talent Acquisition team through a rigorous selection and training process to optimize a recruiter's ability to identify, and contract interested young Americans. Soldiers are eager for these additional skills as indicated by the early interest in the program. Over 1,000 candidates are interested in applying to the Warrant Officer track. The 1st cohort, consisting of 122 current Warrant Officer applicants, resulted in 75 Warrant Officers invited to the mid-March assessment, from which 20-30 are expected to be selected. Cohort 2 and 3 will also include Enlisted Soldiers applying to become Warrant Officers as a part of the selection process. Once complete, the 420Ts will serve as recruiting leadership, leveraging their skills and experience to standardize marketing strategies and inform talent acquisition-policies. When coupled with the upcoming 42T noncommissioned officers (NCOs), we expect to see an increased capacity to leverage data and more effectively match interested recruits with Army contract opportunities.

3. Development of an Innovation and Experimentation Capability within U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC).

The Army further identified the need for an innovation team, composed of recruiters supported by experts in information technology (IT), data management, survey design, labor market analysis, marketing, operations, and procurement. This will create a fluid culture of innovation which will allow the organization to navigate the current socioeconomic environment and keep Army regulations and policies current to support innovation and rapid tech advancements. This new innovation capability within USAREC has the authorities and resources to drive innovation and, importantly, scale successful innovations across the command. Ultimately, this will enable the development of new markets, methods, and technology to compete for talent without sacrificing current and future year production targets.

4. Enhance the evidence base for recruiting policy decisions.

To recruit the best qualified talent for our 21st century force, we must adapt and transform to provide applicants more tailored incentive packages. As such, the Army needs to improve the formal measurement and evaluation of recruiting policy decisions to better determine return on investment and more effectively allocate resources. To address this, we are establishing an evidence-based learning capability in the Army headquarters that will incorporate data collection and program evaluation design into accessions policy planning and implementation. As part of this line of effort, the Army will launch an Enlistment Incentives Pilot Program designed to enable a better understanding of the value our Future Soldiers place on monetary and non-monetary enlistment incentive offerings. This will help us to improve the Army's value proposition year after year. Lessons learned from this pilot will enable the Army to reinvest in innovative programs supporting the recruiting effort while building Army readiness.

5. Aligning Army recruiting leadership and structure.

Finally, we are seeking to elevate USAREC to become a three-star command that oversees enlisted recruiting, Army Cadet Command, and the Army's Enterprise Marketing Office and reports directly to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army in light of its critically important mission. The leadership of USAREC will serve for an extended tenure, building stability and expertise and decreasing the impact of frequent leadership changeover.

Quality Total Army Accessions

Army readiness depends on a high-quality all-volunteer force. The recruiting challenges facing the Army are not new, and they are not from a single cause. Several of the trends we are observing, and now responding to, were years in the making. We are in an intense competition for talent. Some of the benefits that long set the Army apart from the private sector, are becoming more common there such as healthcare and tuition assistance. The Army is addressing each of these challenges head-on, with all resources committed, to turn around recruiting. We are doing better this year at this

same point compared to last year. We are laser focused on building back our end strength to grow additional capabilities that our Army needs.

The Army is carefully monitoring and as needed, adjusting incentives to position itself as a highly desirable employer of choice. We are adjusting enlistment bonuses to help recruit into critical skills specialties. Recruits can combine multiple enlistment bonuses and can combine up to four different incentives. Specific occupational training of choice and duty station of choice remain the most popular incentives.

Investing in the Army requires investing in our youth and helping them realize their full potential. The Army did not meet its recruiting goals in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, it did however enlist 50,181 recruits in the Active Component (AC), 29,310 recruits in the Army National Guard (ARNG), and 9,319 recruits in the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) in FY 2023. The majority of these were high school graduate recruits: 94% high school graduates for the AC, 98% for the ARNG, and 97% in the USAR. Similarly, 59% were Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) Test Score Category (TSC) I-III for the AC, and both the ARNG and USAR recruited 62% TSC I-III Soldiers in FY 2023. Furthermore, TSC IV recruits only made up 3% of the AC and USAR recruits, and 4% of ARNG recruits in FY 2023, ensuring we remained below the Department of Defense (DoD) standard of no more than 4% Category IV recruits. As of February 29, 2024, the AC achieved nearly 31% of its FY 2024 recruiting mission of 55,000. In FY 2024, the AC has recruited 94% high school graduates, and is currently at 56% TSC I-III. The ARNG achieved more than 44% of its FY 2024 recruiting mission of 34,140. The ARNG is at 97% high school graduates and 58% TSC I-III. The USAR achieved more than 29% of its recruiting mission of 14,650. Of these recruits, 98% are high school graduates, and 58% are TSC I-III.

The Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) is yet another innovative and successful pathway we have developed and implemented in response to the tough environment we are amid. This program is an investment in America's youth. It is expanding our recruiting pool, while not sacrificing quality. FSPC is a holistic program to aid potential

recruits to meet either the physical or academic aptitude standards to fully qualify for Army service. In FY 2023, the success of the FSPC program provided upwards of three Brigade Combat Teams (12,887 Soldiers) worth of additional combat power to the Army. 47 percent of graduates are scoring in Test Score Category IIIA or higher, thus ensuring we maintain our continued goal of accessions quality over quantity. 96.6 percent of academic track graduates and 95.4 percent of fitness track graduates have graduated Basic Combat Training which is higher than standard BCT graduation rate of 94 percent. Army is looking at ways to expand the program to provide a pathway for those with the propensity to serve.

Retention

Readiness depends on retaining the right Soldiers in the right jobs at the right time. To do this, we are constantly adapting to the dynamic operational environment. As we see Soldier trends change, we adjust our policies to meet Soldier's needs, wants, and desires, to Army strengths and needs. These adjustments can include monetary and non-monetary incentives we use to drive behavior. A strong retention program further supports continued service in critical roles or skills needed as we transform to the Army of future. In FY 2023, the Regular Army retained 56,239 exceeding the prescribed objective of 55,110 by 2%. Another 7,041 of those scheduled to Expiration Term of Service (ETS) in FY 2023 were transitioned into the Army Reserve or National Guard exceeding the established target of 6,379 by 10.4%. This year, the Army has established and missioned a reclassification goal in addition to the FY 2024 and FY 2025 reenlistment mission objective. The Precision Retention Military Personnel (MILPER) provides Soldiers and families with an overview of the process the Army utilizes to achieve a balance among MOSs. It provides Soldiers and their Families with an outline of which MOSs have limited opportunities due to being overstrength, those with greater opportunities due to being understrength, and the process by which they can reclassify from one to the other. The Regular Army is on track to meet its FY 2024 retention mission objective to retain 54,700 Soldiers and has retained over 32,000 Soldiers year to date which is a completion rate of just over 58%. Overall, Army

retention is high, which signals Soldiers are having a positive experience and achieving their goals and aspirations across our Army.

We are investing in our recruiters by modifying how they are selected, improving their training, increasing their resources, and educating them on available family programs. Other initiatives to improve our recruiting efforts include the development of the Soldier Referral Program to provide an opportunity for soldiers in the AC, USAR, and ARNG to connect with youth where they are, share their Army story, and be rewarded when the referred recruit joins the Army. From implementation of the SRP in January 2023 through 31 March 2024, USAREC contracted 2,277 enlistees from referrals for the Regular Army and 490 for the US Army Reserve, of which 1,781 (RA) and 321 (USAR) have shipped to initial military training. The referrals for those who shipped to training were made by over 1,367 serving Soldiers across the Army. Accordingly, all 1,367 serving Soldiers were awarded the Army Recruiting Ribbon. Of the 1,367 serving Soldiers, 596 were promoted to an advanced rank based on valid referrals that shipped to training under the SRP pilot. In January 2023, the Army began the Recruiter Production Incentive – Assignment Incentive Pay to incentivize recruiters to exceed their quarterly recruiting mission. This new program earns the recruiter \$75 for each contract over the requirement in CAT IIIB, and \$150 for each contract over the requirement in CAT I-IIIA.

Civilian Workforce Recruiting

Our civilian workforce is a force multiplier across the Total Army and our investments in their capabilities is crucial for meeting the needs of the Army of the future. The Army appreciates the many civilian direct hire authorities and other flexibilities that Congress has afforded the Department. These authorities allow us to reach top civilian talent and bring them on faster than through traditional hiring. In addition, direct hire authorities have allowed the Army to increase outreach and proactively recruit from a more diverse audience to acquire uniquely skilled candidates. The Army has implemented several initiatives as part of a broader strategy to reduce civilian time-to-hire and increase candidate quality. This multi-year strategy is designed to increase competency and

skills-based hiring in support of Executive Order 13932, *Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates*, leverage Office of Personnel Management resources, and optimize Army hiring processes. As our multi-year strategy to reduce time-to-hire and improve candidate quality matures, we expect to achieve consistent reductions in the time it takes to hire civilian personnel while simultaneously ensuring a more qualified pool of candidates.

Marketing

The Army provides opportunities and possibilities for investing in oneself for a better life. The Army offers 178 career fields as options for new recruits, and Army Marketing is unrelenting on re-introducing this Army to America's youth. Serving in the Army is not a detour; it allows our youth to take an accelerated path to fulfill their dreams and realize their full potential. We must meet young people where they are and address their concerns that are barriers to entry. Our research informs us that prospects have a lack of knowledge about what Army service can offer, trouble identifying with service culture and lifestyle, and diminished trust that they will be treated fairly. However, the top concerns among the prospect audience continue to be that serving in the Army will either delay or put them "off-track" from their life goals or separate them from friends and family.

Our marketing efforts are tailored to assuage these concerns and show prospects that the Army will accelerate their path to achieving life goals. Last year, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army announced the Army's first new brand refresh effort since "Army Strong" nearly twenty years ago. This effort was the culmination of two years of research and preparation to bring the Army back to relevancy in the minds of Generation Z and others. The Army conducted extensive research among prospects and our important stakeholder audiences and influencers before deciding on the elements of this brand refresh, which include a modernized logo and the tagline "Be All You Can Be." While this tagline is very popular among our veterans, it was not chosen for the sake of nostalgia; it was chosen because testing among our target audience and others revealed it to be the most favored and best suited for communicating the

possibilities available with service in the Army and the purpose and passions of our prospect audience. Elements of this campaign are now in market and appearing in connection with events like the Men's and Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Basketball tournaments, with more planned this fiscal year.

Over the last 12 months the Army put three distinct advertising campaigns in market to communicate from multiple angles to the prospect audience. "Know Your Army" communicated tangible employment benefits that the Army provides. The third Chapter of the "What's Your Warrior" series informed prospects on the breadth of career fields available. Finally, "Decide to Lead" communicated how service as an officer provides unparalleled leadership training and experience. This was the first officer-focused campaign for the Army since 2009. As a result of this campaign, we exceeded our Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps' National Scholarship Board application goals. We have seen a positive cumulative effect on prospective lead generation by using multiple campaigns simultaneously in the market to address the interests of multiple audiences.

Leader Selection, Personnel Modernization, Compensation and Benefits

The foundation of Army Readiness is personnel readiness. Programs, policies, innovations, and management models are transforming the Army's personnel systems to meet future needs. These changes will provide our soldiers and civilians with more opportunities to excel; give our Army the enduring advantage of a transparent, data rich personnel environment; and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent.

Talent Management

Unit level commanders are in the best position to have positive impacts and influence in our Soldiers. Identifying and selecting the very best leaders demonstrates the Army's commitment to take care of its Soldiers and maintain the all-volunteer force. This is critical in the Army's efforts to prioritize human capital investment and talent management by acquiring and leveraging the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors (KSBs) of its soldiers, balanced with the needs of the Army.

The Command Assessment Program (CAP) improves the Army's ability to select the best leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. In November 2023, the Army completed the fifth iteration of CAP. Over 7,000 leaders at lieutenant colonel, colonel, GS-14, GS-15, and E-9 levels have been assessed through CAP over the past four years. To date, CAP has identified 300 leaders with consistent counterproductive behaviors, contributing to more positive command climates. These non-selections for command are provided developmental feedback and encouraged to work on the "gap" in their leadership swing to potentially compete at CAP the following year. CAP has continually improved its feedback mechanism to contribute to individual and organizational growth. When compared to the legacy Centralized Selection List system, CAP assesses and identifies leaders who are more cognitively capable, better written and verbal communicators, more physically fit, more self-aware, more emotionally resilient and less likely to exhibit counterproductive or ineffective leader traits.

The Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP) revolutionizes personnel utilization through a decentralized, regulated marketplace, empowering officers to align with unit needs based on a comprehensive assessment of critical talent data. ATAP operates under a set of robust business rules that delineate responsibilities for units, officers, and the Human Resources Command (HRC) during market cycles. These rules not only ensure fair and transparent operations but also enable the Army to dynamically adjust assignments to meet evolving readiness requirements, thereby strengthening overall force effectiveness.

To date, ATAP has successfully matched over 60,000 officers and warrant officers with assignments across eight cycles, highlighting the effectiveness of the market-style hiring approach in meeting both individual preferences and command requirements. Under the guidance of Army Senior Leaders, efforts are underway to formalize ATAP through the Army Directive, ensuring its integration into the Army's talent management framework. Headquarters Department of the Army Executive Order (EXORD) 241-21 mandates the participation of Active Component units and officers through the Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 (AIM2), further enhancing the reach and efficiency of the process.

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A)

IPPS-A is the Army's 21st Century Talent Management System. It is embracing emerging technologies, integrating modern personnel management and data analytics capabilities, and aligning with the Army's efforts to build a more effective and efficient force. It delivers a secure, comprehensive, and data-rich human resource (HR) talent management system to the Total Force.

Just over a year ago, IPPS-A Release 3 was deployed to over 1.1 million Soldiers in all three components, providing the Total Force visibility required to support Readiness, Talent Management, and Auditability. IPPS-A is the Army's top human resources modernization effort and system of record for accountability of Army personnel. Over the last year, IPPS-A processed more than 2.5 million pay impacting transactions with an accuracy rate of approximately 99 percent, along with over 250 thousand Customer Relationship Management (CRM) cases actioned by HR and IT professionals. IPPS-A trained over 41 thousand HR Professionals on their roles and responsibilities with the new platform while also providing Self-Service and Leaders videos and user manuals. With the transition to Agile Software Development in July 2023, the team is able to easily flex to meet law, regulation, and policy change updates while also completing enhancement requests from the users. IPPS-A averages over 100,000 users daily with 380,000 downloads of the mobile app. IPPS-A is a Soldier's system and it shows.

Compensation and Entitlements

Since the inception of the all-volunteer force, our compensation program has been instrumental in attracting and retaining qualified personnel to fill our ranks. Recent challenges in meeting recruitment goals underscore the importance of this fact, and we deeply appreciate Congress' support in maintaining a high-quality all-volunteer force. Recent initiatives by the DoD and Congress to enhance the quality of life for Servicemembers have resulted in several welcomed changes. The recent increases to Basic Pay, Basic Allowance for Subsistence, and housing allowances have been positively received by our members and will significantly impact the lives of Soldiers and

their families. Additionally, expansions in parental leave and the inclusion of bereavement leave demonstrate our commitment to supporting our Soldiers and their families during times of celebration and sorrow. Furthermore, granting the Department authority to cover pet travel expenses during Permanent Change of Station reflects our concern for all members of our Soldiers' families. Lastly, we commend the efforts of DoD and Congress in addressing food security for our Soldiers and families through the Basic Needs Allowance, particularly benefiting our most vulnerable junior enlisted Soldiers with larger families.

The steadfast support from Congress and the proactive efforts of the Department of Defense to improve the quality of life for Servicemembers not only demonstrates our nation's commitment to our Soldiers and their families but also underscore our dedication to maintaining a high-quality, all-volunteer force. As we continue to face evolving challenges, we remain committed to ensuring that our compensation program and benefits align with the needs of our personnel, enabling us to fulfill our mission effectively.

Transition Assistance Program

The Army is fully committed to caring for its people, from the beginning of their tours in basic training until they leave the service. It is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure soldiers successfully transition back into our communities after their active-duty military service and become ambassadors for the Army within those communities. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is the overarching program that provides assistance, information, training, counseling, and services to eligible soldiers in transition to help them achieve career readiness upon separation, retirement, or release from active duty. During FY 2023, 106,477 Active Army, Reserve and Guard Soldiers transitioned off active duty with nearly half meeting TAP Career Readiness Standard (CRS) requirements and 80% beginning their TAP process at least 230 days prior to transition.

TAP offers Soldiers the opportunity to participate in the Career Skills Program (CSP), also known as the DoD Skillbridge program. Soldiers have the option to participate in first-class apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, employment skills training, and internships to obtain industry-recognized skills, and move into high-demand and highly skilled careers with little-to-no cost upon transition. During FY 2023, 10% of transitioning Soldiers successfully completed a CSP. This is a highly popular program that is continuing to gain more traction as commanders at all levels are being educated on the benefits afforded to transitioning soldiers.

Soldier For Life

The Soldier for Life (SFL) program is reconnecting the Army with communities throughout the country. SFL's outreach and advocacy efforts focus on engaging local governments, non-government organizations, private organizations, and non-profit organizations to influence policy, programs, and services that support Soldiers, Veterans, and Families while also encouraging Soldiers to remain Army ambassadors upon their transition from service.

In FY 2023, SFL focused on building greater awareness and knowledge of the Army within civilian communities across the country, especially where there are no Army installations. These efforts included: leveraging SFL relationships to improve institutional and community awareness of programs available to support the military community, expanding support to the accessions enterprise by leveraging outreach and centers of influence to support the recruiting mission, and building the SFL mindset by partnering with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and Army Centers of Excellence to instill the mindset into the operational force through Initial Military Training, Professional Military Education, and operational touch-points throughout the Soldier life cycle. Veteran support in communities was fostered with the launch of the SFL apparel line, now in over 30 military exchange stores and online. In FY 2024, SFL is reframing its mission and vision, with a focus on awareness, understanding, and embodiment of the SFL mindset in every Soldier throughout the Soldier life cycle. SFL's unique program directly reaches Soldiers at military

installations, in the Army Reserve, in the Army National Guard, and our Retired Soldiers as well. Efforts continue to identify issues that impact Soldier transitions in the areas of education, employment and health and wellness. But employment efforts are being broadened by re-aligning the Army Partnership for Your Success (PaYS) Program from accessions to SFL.

The SFL mission remains critical because it directly connects external organizations to the Army. Soldiers in the SFL office are often the only contact that communities have with the Army. SFL's presence makes a difference.

Conclusion

The Army's mission remains unchanged, to fight and win our Nation's wars. To meet our mission requirements, while building and transforming the Army of the future, we rely on this Congress to support our efforts through the President's budget and in our collaborative relationship concerning our personnel policies. This relationship and these investments in our people will ensure the Army's readiness today and into the future. Rest assured, the Army's number one priority will remain our people—our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and Veteran Soldiers for Life. The people of the United States Army—these servicemembers who serve our Nation, both in and out of uniform, along with their families—are our strength and our legacy. Congressional support for our Army enables our ability to transform our force while showcasing our abilities and offering opportunities to allow careers and Families to flourish.

Thank you for your generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian professionals, and their Families.

Douglas F. Stitt**Lieutenant General**

Lieutenant General Douglas F. Stitt is a Distinguished Military Graduate of Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and was commissioned as an Armor Officer in 1990. He holds two Masters Degrees, one in Defense Studies and one in Strategic Studies from the Canadian Forces Staff College and the Army War College.

Lieutenant General Stitt's initial assignments were as a Rifle Platoon Leader and Executive Officer in the 3rd Battalion, 6th Infantry at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Company Command of the 129th AG Company (Postal), Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Battalion Commander of the 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd

Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Lieutenant General Stitt's key staff assignments include Adjutant, 1-41 Infantry, Fort Hood, Texas; Assistant Professor of Military Science, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; Chief of Strength Management, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Deputy G1 and Secretary of the General Staff, Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy; Brigade Adjutant, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Deputy G1/AG, 82nd Airborne Division, Deputy Personnel Operations Division, United States Army Special Operations Command, G1, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Director, Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky; Executive Officer, HQDA DCS G-1, Pentagon, Virginia; Director, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky; and Director, Military Personnel Management, HQDA DCS G-1, Pentagon, Virginia. Lieutenant General Stitt is currently serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Pentagon, Virginia.

Major deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom 2005-2006, Operation Enduring Freedom 2007-2008, Operation Iraqi Freedom 2009-2010, and Operation Enduring Freedom 2014.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), the Bronze Star (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Ranger Tab, Master Parachutist Badge, and Combat Action Badge.

Lieutenant General Stitt and his spouse Beth, Norwich University Class of 1992, have two daughters, Laura and Anna.

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UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD J. CHEESEMAN JR., U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
AND
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(PERSONNEL, MANPOWER, & TRAINING)
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
ON
PERSONNEL POSTURE
APRIL 17, 2024

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished Members of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Navy's most important asset – our people. In an era of great power competition and growing global unrest, it is imperative that we not only build, maintain, train, and equip combat-ready, lethal Naval forces, but we must maintain the strong foundation of our most critical strength, our highly trained and skilled personnel. Our Navy builds Great People, Leaders, and Teams – to innovate, solve hard problems, and most importantly, to dominate in combat. By doing so, our Navy stands ready, from seabed to space, to deter or confront potential adversaries that endanger freedom around the world, disrupt open sea lanes and threaten the world's economy and global commerce.

Notwithstanding the global threats our Navy faces, we continue to face challenges in recruiting America's top talent. Let me say upfront that I remain confident in our current approach to aggressively attack this issue and appreciate the continued support and leadership from this committee and others. While I remain confident, I must acknowledge that these challenges exacerbate Fleet manning shortages, putting additional stress on our force, which could negatively affect readiness and potentially impact future retention, in an environment where retention is ever important.

While we are making significant headway, overcoming recruiting challenges requires not only MyNavy HR efforts, but also support of the collective Navy team and our country, from the Nation's leaders to supporting industries, communities, families, and veterans. To maintain the most combat-effective Navy in the world and achieve optimum warfighting readiness, we all must remain adaptable, innovative, and resilient, as we hold ourselves accountable to our Sailors, their families, and our Nation.

Accessing Our Navy's Talent

We continue to face challenges in the current and forecasted economic environment and tough labor market, resulting in projected recruiting shortfalls in the coming years. The Navy continues to explore and evaluate new methods for attracting qualified, motivated and capable applicants. As we consider new policies and initiatives, we are committed to Recruit Training Command's boot camp and "A" school graduation standards. Navy is leveraging data driven processes to aggressively pursue the 40,600 Active Component contract mission. The Navy is projecting a mitigated miss of approximately 6,700 but continues to build pathways for all qualified individuals who want to serve throughout a myriad of recruiting initiatives.

Recruiting Initiatives:

- **Recruiting Operations Center:** The Navy Recruiting Operations Center (ROC) was created to monitor recruiting efforts in real time, focused on data driven processes to increase production per recruiter and remove variance among our 26 Talent Acquisition Groups. Navy Recruiting Command is now led by an experienced two-star admiral (traditionally run by a 1 star in his/her first flag job).
- **Every Sailor is a Recruiter:** Program for currently serving Sailors to share their experience and provide leads of interested applicants to Navy recruiting.
- **Navy Recruiting Reserve Command:** Established to better focus on the prior service mission.

- **Increased Marketing and Advertising (M&A)** dollars to improve public awareness, understanding, and positive perceptions of the Navy's mission and Navy service in the long term.
- **Increased Recruiter Manning** enables the Navy a greater reach and engagement with the youth population across Recruiting Nation.
- **New Job Opportunities** created to keep competitive edge against adversaries and parity with the civilian workforce, the Navy established both the Cyber Warfare Technician (CWT) and Robotics Warfare (RW) ratings.
- **Enlistment Bonus** program leveraged to attract high-quality recruits for high demand ratings. Future Sailors can earn up to \$140,000 in bonuses (by successfully completing requirements for critical jobs in the Navy).

Future Sailor Preparatory Programs:

- **Future Sailor Preparatory Course Physical Fitness (FSPC-P):** Bring potential Future Sailors who are marginally out of body composition standards into line with Navy and Department of Defense (DoD) requirements.
- **FSPC Academic (FSPC-A):** For Future Sailors with lower Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores, Navy has implemented a course designed to increase their proficiency in basic academics through structured classroom instruction and independent study. This could reduce attrition in later training, while broadening the Navy occupations these Sailors are able to train to.

Policy and Waiver Expansion:

- **Category IV:** A limited number of our total accessions can join the Navy if they attain an AFQT score of 10-30, as long as they have qualifying line scores to fill an open rating. These Future Sailors will complete the FSPC-A at Recruit Training Command (RTC) before they begin basic training.
- **Single Parent Policy:** Waives dependency status for the Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) enlistment of unmarried individuals with custody of up to two dependents under the age of 18.
- **Tier 2:** Authorized the contracting and accessing of Tier 2 applicants who scored 31 or above on the AFQT. Tier 2 applicants are non-high school graduates who hold a GED, previously only accessed with a 50 or greater AFQT.
- **Tier 3:** In January 2024, the Navy began recruitment of Future Sailors without educational credentials, but who score a 50 or above on the AFQT. This policy expands the pool of highly qualified applicants by a projected 500 to 2,000 people.
- **Receptive Acclimation at RTC:** In response to high historical attrition rates, RTC redesigned training during Processing Days (P-Days) to increase teamwork and cultural acclimation to combat attrition due to psychological reasons.

Managing Our Talent

Navy continues to evaluate and improve our capability to attract, develop, and manage a talented and diverse workforce in order to maintain a Fleet prepared to fight and win in long term strategic competition. The Navy is modifying our talent marketplace to be a modern, flexible, and transparent assignment process that more effectively balances a Sailor's assignment, location, and advancement opportunities with the Navy's mission and operational needs.

We continue to execute the Detailing Marketplace Campaign Plan (DMCP), with specific emphasis on Billet Based Advancement. As one of my strategic pillars, it is focused on giving Sailors choice to extend or return at sea going billets with greater responsibility, pay and rank. While we are testing this policy implementation across all paygrades of two sea-intensive ratings now, we are targeting expansion to all ratings and for duty both at sea and ashore in the coming years.

We continue to employ the expanded Defense Officer Personnel Management Act authorities enacted in the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act and appreciate the strong support for the various authorities and initiatives that reinforce our ability to attract and retain a talented officer corps. We highlight three areas that yielded discernible results:

- **Promotion Merit Reorder:** Demonstrated the value and primacy of merit over simple time in service.
- **Expanded Continuation Authority:** Most recently enabled us to have senior officers fill shortages in the Acquisition Corps communities for FY23.
- **Expanded Officer Spot Promotion Authority:** Facilitated filling at-sea and operational O-4, O-5 and O-6 billets with officers possessing critical skills (post-operational or operational command executive leadership).

Retaining Our Talent

Our annual Health of the Force (HOF) survey asks participants to indicate their current career plans. Compared to previous years, more O-1 through O-3 and E-1 through E-6 intend to remain in the Navy until retirement, a nod to the quality of service and job satisfaction that our Service provides. Overall, Navy enlisted retention remains healthy. We ended FY23 meeting or exceeding our retention benchmark forecasts across most of our zones of service. Navy officer retention has some challenges, which continue to be addressed with a combination of monetary and non-monetary force management levers focused on Aviation, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Surface Warfare, Submarine Warfare, and Naval Special Warfare.

Navy anticipates meeting our FY24 retention targets. To help address recruiting shortfalls, we are applying a combination of authorized monetary and non-monetary force management levers including:

- Programs that provide investment in a Sailor's personal (or family) development in exchange for additional obligated service in the Navy.
- Direct monetary compensation for retention decisions in critical ratings, skillsets, and career milestones.
- Expanding the ability to offer geo-stability, which has proven successful, including co-location with a military spouse and assignment policies that allow Sailors to extend at sea or take tougher jobs in exchange for guaranteed assignment at a location.

Quality of Service

Quality of Service (QoS) is a Navy priority. The Navy uses our annual Health of the Force (HOF) survey to garner insight into the Navy's culture and climate, including the protective factors of cohesion, connectedness, inclusion, organizational commitment, and trust. The

percentage of participants with moderate to high levels of these key factors increased in 2023, a testament to the initiatives and commitment to continue to advance our Navy's culture. The Navy continues to monitor Sailor well-being through risk factors associated with stress and burnout, which remain concerning due to inadequate manning and mission demands. To get after this, MyNavy HR, alongside the greater Navy efforts, are aggressively pursuing QoS initiatives to improve the quality of life and quality of work of our Sailors.

Advancing Our Navy's Culture

Everyone in the Navy deserves to serve in an environment of trust and respect, where connectedness and inclusion are high. Building on the Navy's call to think, act, and operate differently, the CNO launched the Culture of Excellence 2.0 construct that focuses on building Great People, Leaders, and Teams. COE 2.0 charges leaders to prioritize a Sailor's holistic wellness of mind, body, and spirit; master self-awareness and emotional intelligence; and build teams that create a sense of belonging. By simplifying, streamlining, and aligning our existing people programs, COE 2.0 will foster a Navy culture where Sailors feel supported and empowered to be their very best.

We will measure and assess culture through existing tools, such as the Command Climate Assessment (CCA) and the Health of the Force (HoF) Survey, and with new tools, such as the Virtual Commanding Officer's Suggestion Box. The CCA provides a snapshot of harmful behaviors through use of both the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) and focus groups conducted post-survey by Command Resilience Team (CRT) members. The DEOCS collects information on risk and protective factors including sexual and racial harassment and discrimination, workplace hostility, diversity and inclusion, and other aspects of organizational climate. The occurrence of specific behaviors, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, suicide risk, or domestic violence may be identified via DEOCS comments or follow-on focus groups. The HoF and suggestion box provide us opportunities for feedback on command culture and climate.

COE 2.0 is designed to be a living document, updated as necessary to include best practices learned from the Fleet. By prioritizing command culture alongside combat readiness, COE 2.0 will prepare us for victory in combat by innovating to solve hard problems and reduce harmful behaviors.

Supporting Our Talent with HR Service Delivery & Modern IT Solutions

The Navy remains focused on providing convenient, intuitive and transparent HR services, empowering Sailors, commands, and HR professionals to actively participate in a streamlined HR resolution process, using technology to guide users to their desired outcome. Navy Personnel Command (NPC) and MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) continue to improve the quality of service for our Sailors and their families, delivering improved pay and personnel processes to meet the Navy's future mission and workforce requirements.

MyNavy HR transformation continues to advance across all five lines of effort: Single Point of Entry (SPoE), Navy Pay and Personnel (NP2), Learning Stack (LS), Enterprise Customer

Relationship Management (eCRM) and Authoritative Data Environment (ADE). Each line of effort is being pursued to make Sailor access to IT data faster and easier, modernizing how the Navy handles digital information.

With the increased reliance on smart devices, we strive to provide many solutions in the palm of Sailors' hands and streamline the myriad of digital administrative resources provided to the Fleet. Answering the call for increased productivity in recruiting, MyNavy HR delivered increased capability on hand-held devices, empowering recruiters to immediately input applicant information anywhere, at any time, reducing administrative burden and enabling more time in the field for interactions with Future Sailors. Additional upgrades to hand-held devices have empowered recruiters to engage with potential recruits across popular social media platforms and now provides cloud-optimized mapping routes for engagements with Future Sailors.

Transformation is a work in progress with forthcoming pilot programs that will allow Sailors to gain secure and quick access to their career and personal data, as well as track and initiate cases for issue resolution and increased visibility into the Permanent Change of Station process through a modern, more user-friendly interface, all in a continued effort to ensure that the MyNavy HR vision remains aligned with Sailors' needs.

Flag Officer Reductions

The Navy continues to face challenges following the reduction of more than eight percent of its Flag Officer billets in support of the Space Force and as required by the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). These cuts come at a high cost to maintaining operational readiness, impeding Navy's efforts in an already challenging operational environment, and in direct conflict with the demands of strategic naval competition which require more rather than less senior uniformed leadership and expertise in the dominant physical domain of concern: the maritime domain.

The reduced number of Flag Officer billets has resulted in shifting critical work to other Flag Officers and Senior Executives increasing demands on those Flag Officers and Senior Executives by double and triple hatting of positions. At present, nearly one third of the Navy's remaining 150 Flag Officer billets are double or triple hatting with some positions having more than a dozen direct reports. Rather than streamlining processes, the reductions have increased direct reports, multi-hatted positions, and the reliance on Selected Reservists, impeding those processes, creating inefficiencies and complexities in our command and control structures, and increasing overall risk to mission accomplishment.

Conclusion

I have complete confidence in the collective efforts of the MyNavy HR team to attract, develop, and retain Great People, Leaders, and Teams, which will ensure we maintain our competitive advantage. We will keep striving to do better every day, fix what needs fixing, and commit to improving the quality of our services. I'm eager to continue working with this committee and others to maintain our strong warfighting teams by recruiting and retaining talented individuals across the United States. On behalf of the United States Navy personnel and their families, I thank you for your sustained commitment and unwavering support.

Vice Admiral Rick Cheeseman



Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Personnel, Manpower, and Training, N1, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Naval Personnel

Vice Adm. Rick Cheeseman is a native of Carney's Point, New Jersey, and a 1989 graduate of The Pennsylvania State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Program. Cheeseman earned a Master's degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy from National Defense University's Joint Advanced Warfighting School in 2007.

A career Surface Warfare Officer, he served onboard guided missile cruisers, guided missile destroyers, guided missile frigates, fleet replenishment oilers, and various afloat staffs. His afloat commands include USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) and USS Monterey (CG 61). Ashore, he served overseas as the officer in charge of the Naval Forces

Korea Detachment in Chinhae, Republic of Korea, and as the Maritime Operations Center director for Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain. In addition, he has served in a variety of manning/manpower tours, to include an assignment as deputy for Manpower, Training and Strategy at OPNAV N96 and as director, Surface Warfare Assignments (PERS-41).

As a flag officer, he recently served as commander, Carrier Strike Group TEN. Other tours include assignment as commander, Carrier Strike Group TWO and as assistant commander, Navy Personnel Command for Career Management (PERS-4).

Cheeseman assumed duties as the Navy's 60th Chief of Naval Personnel June 3, 2022. 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 dedicated professionals engaged in the recruiting, talent management, training and development of over 400,000 Navy personnel. As the Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Officer for the Navy, he leads the development of initiatives to integrate and implement strategic DE&I initiatives into Department of Navy's culture, policies, programs and core functions. His responsibilities include overseeing Navy Recruiting Command, Navy Personnel Command and Naval Education and Training Command.

His personal awards include the Legion of Merit (five awards), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (six awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards), and various unit and expeditionary awards.

Last Updated: 22 July 2022

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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES F. GLYNN
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
PERSONNEL POSTURE
ON
17 APRIL 2024

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide testimony on Marine Corps personnel. The Marine Corps' performance in future battles will be defined in large part by the talent management investments made today and in the future. That is why we are in the midst of implementing a modernized talent management system that better harnesses, develops, and retains the unique skills and strengths demanded of Marines by Force Design and in support of our nation's defense.

RECRUITING

The significance of Marine Corps recruiting efforts is highlighted by the fact that all - officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior service - fall under the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC), the Commanding General of which reports directly to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC).

Your Marine Corps made its recruiting mission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and is currently on track to meet it again this FY. Officer and prior service recruiting missions for the Marine Corps continue to be successful, despite enduring enlisted recruiting challenges. As we embark on the next 50 years of the All-Volunteer Force, we are reminded that it is more accurately an "All-Recruited Force." Service to our nation and the military remains an aspirational pathway to greater opportunities – both in and out of uniform. And service as a Marine continues to attract those who meet our standards and aspire to prove themselves worthy of earning the title. We must collectively ensure the health of our All-Volunteer Force and the strategic advantage it provides – talent, capability, and warfighting excellence. The CMC remains committed to providing resources and sending the very best Marines to become recruiters in order to achieve the accession mission while sustaining quality and standards. One in four of our general officers have been recruiters during their career, and we pride ourselves in assigning a sergeant major to every recruiting station. This is the bedrock of successful Marine Corps recruiting.

A significant concern now and going forward is our start pool of 22%, which was leveraged to ensure mission accomplishment, and is now well below the traditional 50% level. This requires Marine recruiters to focus on finding individuals to ship in the near-term, impacting their time to physically and mentally prepare for the rigors of the transformation process to Marine. We are working to grow the start pool, but it is a slow and deliberate process. Re-alignment of recruiters and recruiting assets will help. In keeping with Marines' tenet of "exploit success," we are increasing our recruiting force by several hundred recruiters. We will continue to need robust resourcing – to include advertising and modernization funds – to ensure success. We also look forward to the Department's assessment of the medical screening process from the Military Health System GENESIS Task Force with a focus on finding efficiencies and increasing staffing of MEPCOM's medical providers.

What We Are Doing to Address the Challenge

Sustaining Quality. Your enlisted Marines are exceptionally talented, skilled, dedicated, and motivated to serve - meeting our high standards; we will never sacrifice this quality. The Marine Corps exceeds Department of Defense (DOD) standards by every measure of quality, and it takes Marine recruiters connecting with communities in every zip code to sustain.

Expanding Markets. Marines are the strength of the Corps, and we deliberately and continuously engage young people from the full spectrum of backgrounds, experiences, race and ethnicity, and gender to draw the best talent into our ranks. Over the past decade, racially/ethnically diverse enlisted accessions increased from 34% to 57%, and the same category of officer accessions more than doubled from 16% to 35%. Enlisted female accessions remain steady at 9%, and female officer accessions have increased to 13%.

Adapting Advertising. The Marine Corps advertising program is essential to building awareness among high quality populations that are increasingly unfamiliar with military service. Advertising funds repay many times over, producing lower first-term attrition, higher quality Marines, and increased readiness. Robust and sustained advertising funding is essential, now more than ever. We are thankful for Congressional support to modernize how we recruit in today's increasingly online world.

Where We Need Assistance

National Dialogue on Service. Those who have served in uniform depart the ranks with professionalism, maturity, leadership, and skills that translate well into the civilian workforce. Veterans serve ably in industries, commercial sectors, and government across the nation, bringing enhanced leadership and an exceptional work ethos back to their communities. However, messaging about service to the country competes within a crowded and fragmented media environment – which often promotes a different narrative. We must challenge the misconceptions and misinformation about military service. We must converge at the highest levels and bolster a whole-of-Government national dialogue to inform young men and women, and their parents and influencers, about the value of honorable service in uniform and not solely rely on service messaging. We recognize our veterans are a key part of this and we seek to better leverage opportunities like Skillbridge to enhance the dialogue on service in and out of uniform.

Access to High Schools. We thank Congress for its continued support for recruiter access to high schools and colleges. The FY2024 national Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provided additional timeliness guidelines for recruiter access to directory lists. However, continued vigilance is essential to ensure that recruiters have consistent and quality access to ensure the ability to recruit the best. The single biggest reason we hear from young people for not joining the Corps is that they simply weren't aware of the potential opportunities. Maintaining consistent access to high schools and student directories remains

a top priority for ensuring continued opportunity for all qualified individuals to serve. We will certainly come to Congress with new ideas to further improve recruiting.

RETENTION

As a result of Force Design, we shifted from a “recruit and replace” to an “invest and retain” model with immediately positive results. We are in the midst of transitioning to a more experienced enlisted force characterized by increased retention and contract utilization; this will give us the technical and leadership intensive skills necessary on 21st-century battlefields. At the same time, the Service is increasing investment in quality of life and quality of service initiatives most closely related to the care of and retention of Marines and their families. We have implemented five major reforms initiatives: 1) the Commandant's Active and Reserve Retention Program, 2) the extended FTAP retention model 3) the small unit leadership initiatives, 4) promotion allocation fulfillment, 5) Marine Corps Graduate education Program Enlisted pilot. All efforts are focused on sustaining combat readiness by increasing the number of trained, experienced, and deployable Marines across the total force.

Although recruiting conditions are challenging, once your Marines become Marines, they want to “stay Marine.” We had historic retention in FY23 and are on track to meet mission again in FY24. We are seeing success across demographic groups as well. Enlisted women have been retained at a 5% higher proportional rate at both their first re-enlistment and subsequent term re-enlistments when compared to male re-enlistees. Female officers retain higher than their male counterparts at typical decision points which coincide with end of initial contracts, end of obligation due to accepting orders, and retirement eligibility. Despite these successes, the retention environment is competitive. We continue to experience challenges retaining certain communities, like aviation, cyber, and some of our intelligence specialties. Of particular importance is aviation retention. Assessments have shown this must be viewed holistically and cannot be solved by bonuses alone. We are exploring monetary and non-monetary incentives, to include improving aircraft readiness rates and flying hours, and increasing the production pipeline throughput, all of which will support increased operational readiness. We pride ourselves on the ability to develop quality citizens, and a successful transition from uniformed service can be just as important as the initial transformation of becoming a Marine. To that end we continue to study transition and support programs as we seek to better balance benefits to the individual against operational requirements of the Corps.

We thank Congress – especially this Subcommittee - for the incentives, flexibilities, and special pays you have authorized. They enable the development of better strategic talent pools and increase access to our talent for longer periods and with more options to better access and match it to warfighting requirements. The current and future environment also necessitates employment of non-traditional approaches, skillsets, and talent management systems to enable the Marine Corps to prevail and win

against peer-competitors, while competing with industry and others to attract and inspire the highest quality of individuals to serve. We are studying and implementing many of these as part of Talent Management.

Incentives & Special Pays

We continue to use both monetary and non-monetary incentives to retain, match, and assign Marines to billets that are appropriate for their experience and skill. Selective Reenlistment Bonuses for active and reserve Marines allow shaping specific personnel requirements by targeting critical military occupational specialties and supporting lateral movement of Marines to these billets. For FY24, we continue to be proactive in the retention campaign by designing complementary monetary and non-monetary incentive packages – tailored to individual Marines with unique desires and aspirations.

The Marine Corps has established a Pacific (PAC) Cell to focus solely on improving quality of life and morale for our Marines, civilian workforce, and families throughout the strategic Indo-Pacific. The PAC Cell is engaged with those units stationed throughout the Pacific and has solicited feedback directly from them. One idea we are studying is the adequacy of policies regarding shipment and storage of privately owned vehicles for Marines stationed overseas. This would improve spouse employment, access to childcare, and other quality of life priorities. We are also considering other monetary and non-monetary incentives to reduce the cost and stress of executing orders to overseas locations for those in uniform and Civilian Marines. We thank Congress for your support in Marine quality of life and look forward to working with you on any policies that may require legislative action.

Compensation

Competitive compensation is a foundation of the all-volunteer force with impacts to both recruiting and retention. Currently, basic pay and accompanying benefits, such as housing, medical care, bonuses and allowances, and tax advantages, are competitive. However, inflation impacts the value of military pay, so we appreciate the 5.2% pay raise this year. We must ensure that our Marines receive competitive pay and are positioned to be less susceptible to economic volatility. The Department is studying compensation holistically as part of the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, and we are participating in this study and look forward to its results.

Audit

As we invest in new platforms, barracks, and training, it is our responsibility as good stewards of taxpayer funds to continue to prove that when the Corps is provided a taxpayer dollar, we can show exactly where and how it has been invested – a responsibility we take very seriously. Following a

rigorous two-year audit, the Marine Corps achieved an unmodified audit opinion, the best possible outcome – and the first time in the Department of Defense’s history that any service has received an unmodified audit opinion. These results demonstrate how seriously the Marine Corps takes its stewardship of taxpayer funds and our ability to account for and put to best use every dollar trusted to the service. This audit supports what we have believed for a long time – when Congress provides the Marine Corps a dollar, we invest it wisely, and we can tell you exactly where and how it was spent to further our Nation’s national security objectives. The Marine Corps worked with independent public accountants to validate budgetary balances and records and to audit physical assets at installations and bases across the globe. These actions included counting military equipment, buildings, structures, supplies, and ammunition held by the Marine Corps and our DoD Partners. The audit’s favorable opinion was only possible through the support and hard work of numerous dedicated Marines, civilian Marines, and many other partners across DoD. Nonetheless, we will not rest on our laurels; the audit report pointed out some areas for improvement, and we will use these recommendations to make our fiscal practices even better.

Healthcare

Healthcare remains consistently highlighted by Marines and families as a factor in their career retention decisions. Quality healthcare for our Marines is the minimum standard and vital to the retention of the force and family. To care for our families, and those who support our service adjacent to our ranks, is also imperative. It is a growing perception that access and quality of medical care is eroding, and it has emerged as a factor in decisions to continue to serve in uniform.

The challenge is particularly acute overseas in locations such as Japan, where network care in the civilian community is not always readily accessible nor at the standard set by the Department of Defense for our Marines and their families. The United State Indo-Pacific Command is of heightened strategic importance and access to quality healthcare must be a priority. We look forward to the results of the review of healthcare quality directed in the FY24 NDAA.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent Management (TM) is the act of aligning the talents of Marines with the needs of the service to maximize the potential of both - increasing Marine Corps combat capability and readiness. It describes a fundamental redesign of our personnel system to maximize the number of fully trained, qualified, experienced, and deployable Marines within our total force. The overarching goal is to increase Marine Corps combat capability and remain the premier expeditionary force-in-readiness. TM requires that we recruit and retain the best talent, modernize the assignment process consistent with our warfighting philosophy, introduce new measures to increase career flexibility, and utilize modern digital

tools, processes, and analytics, with transparency. Throughout this redesign, we remain committed to our high standards that attract young Americans to the Marine Corps and drive warfighting outcomes and the sacrifice, pride, and dedication necessary to achieve the hard-earned title Marine. We honor the commitment as new Marines arrive in our ranks expecting meaningful and challenging assignments and a culture of professionalism, pride, mutual trust, and respect. Marines are responding to efforts to recognize their talents, and I ask for your continued support of these efforts. Much like the overarching approach to Force Design, TM is a multi-year, total force effort – a service-wide strategic design process that we are executing.

Some of our promising talent management initiatives include:

- Commandant's Retention Program (CRP) identifies the most competitive Marines and offers them an opportunity to stay a Marine via a pre-approved reenlistment. Since introduction in FY23, the number of Marines selected for CRP increased steadily to over 3,000 Marines recently selected for FY25. In order to capture the benefits of both Early Reenlistment Authority and CRP, these two programs were combined for FY25.
- Staff Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) Promotion Board Realignment realigns promotion boards to better sequence the assignment and reenlistment processes to reduce SNCO billet gaps in the fleet and condense the processing time of reenlistment packages. The realignment also provides greater predictability for SNCOs and their families while reducing change of stations moves affecting families during the school year.
- Special Duty Assignment (SDA) Volunteer Program expansion allows Marine volunteers to provide duty station preference for volunteer recruiters, drill instructors, and combat instructors. This program increased volunteers by 62%, which reduces involuntary screenings and improves morale and retention.
- Direct Affiliation Program (DAP) affords qualified Active Component Marines the opportunity to seamlessly transition to the Reserve Component with no break in service. This program also provides numerous benefits not offered to traditional reserve accessions from the Individual Ready Reserve to include bonuses of up to \$25,000 for a 3-year drilling commitment.
- Increasing Lateral Movement allows Marines to follow their career goals, while staying in the Marine Corps family. To ensure the even distribution of retained talent across the force, we will continue incentivizing lateral move opportunities for qualified Marines by reducing administrative barriers to lateral moves and offering targeted bonuses for high-demand, low-density skills.

Other initiatives in development:

- Improving MOS assignment. We are developing a better, more predictive, data-driven matching tool that will optimally align applicant interest, Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) skill requirements, and the needs of the Marine Corps. Using this new Marine Corps Occupational Skills Matching (MCOSM) tool for enlisted Marines, we will better align interests and talents with the needs of the Service. Potential applications for MCOSM extend beyond accessions, and we plan to utilize it to assist in PMOS classifications and career retention.
- Retention Prediction Network (RPN). We are currently developing the RPN, a program used to identify potential recruit's likelihood to enlist and continue to serve through their first enlistment and beyond. RPN was a multi-year collaborative effort with academia that harnessed vast quantities of manpower data to provide data-informed talent management decisions. The objective is to better recruit individuals with attributes aligned with becoming Marines.
- Talent Marketplace. The Talent Management Engagement Portal (TMEP) will modernize the current assignments system with a Total Force, transparent, data-based environment that allows Marines, commands, and duty assignment professionals to collaborate on the assignments process. At full implementation, TMEP is envisioned to utilize advanced analytics supported by artificial intelligence and machine learning elements to enable a market-style assignment system. It will allow for more informed decisions throughout a Marine's career, providing data on factors including billet availability, assignment desirability, family considerations and potential career paths.
- Promotion Opt Out allows officers to opt out of promotion without penalty and enables them to complete a broadening assignment, advanced education, career progression requirement, or other assignment. We implemented this authority in CY22 and we will continue to assess program efficacy and measure the impacts on the deliberate development of our leaders.
- Marine Corps Graduate Education Program – Enlisted has opened attendance at the Naval Post-Graduate School (NPS) to selected enlisted Marines to earn a master's degree in specific programs. Six highly qualified enlisted Marines were selected for the initial and second cohort and will be ready for assignment later this year or next depending on degree received.

The talent management success thus far is dependent on modern technology systems, and we are working toward modernizing the IT portfolio and consolidating older, disparate systems into a small subset of interoperable, multi-faceted applications that ride on a single IT system hosted in the cloud. Cloud migration allows IT efficiencies and effectively scaled applications, databases, and services across the enterprise to meet emergent requirements in a dynamic environment. As we migrate to the cloud, we will be able to optimize and capitalize on the promise of artificial intelligence and machine learning. An area of interest and future support is acquisition authority for software development and update. Our

vision of cloud-based, application-accessible platforms must move at the “speed of relevance.” The goal is to have modern technology with increased capabilities to enable the management of Marines’ careers.

Building Strong Teams

The United States Marine Corps is a notable example of a meritocratic institution. The Corps takes pride in commitment to recognizing and rewarding excellence among its ranks in a fair, transparent, and methodical way. Whether it is accessing, assigning, promoting, awarding, or retaining Marines, we remain dedicated to merit-based treatment of warriors. To remain the most ready and lethal force, we capitalize on the knowledge, skills, abilities, performance, and potential of every Marine, and provide each Marine the same opportunity for success on their merits.

Since 2010, racially/ethnically diverse enlisted accessions have increased from 34% to 57% and similar officer accessions have increased from 16% to 35%. Women serving in combat arms units are continuing to increase. Currently, nearly 20% of Brigadier Generals and Brigadier General selects are of diverse racial, ethnic or gender background. We remain committed to efforts to reach out to every segment of this nation to find those patriotic youth inspired to become a Marine.

TAKING CARE OF MARINES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Fighting effectiveness is not just built on unit training; it is also built on trust and maintained with a Marine’s support structure at home and in their communities. Marines rely on the institution to provide them and their families with stability. To that end, we recognize the importance of Marine and family predictability and support it as a major line-of-effort for successfully achieving our talent management goals and combat readiness.

Marine Corps Total Fitness. The Marine Corps is promoting and strengthening support of Marine Corps Total Fitness (MCTF) across the enterprise. MCTF is a framework for optimizing human performance, mission readiness, and resilience that emphasizes four primary domains: Mental, physical, spiritual, and social. The goals of MCTF align with the Marine Corps integrated primary prevention efforts to improve overall wellness and resilience for Marines and families. We are developing Warrior Athlete Readiness and Resilience (WARR) centers that will consolidate health, wellness, prevention, and performance capabilities. We seek enhanced coping and resiliency skills through stress identification and mitigation, positive psychology informed approaches to relationships and parenting, and peer-to-peer mentorship. Thus far, WARR centers have opened at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, with others in the works. We appreciate Congress’ support of this initiative to promote the performance and resiliency of the Corps and our families.

Family Support

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Flexibility. The Marine Corps continues to prioritize stability for units and reduce the stress placed on Marine and their families. PCS moves, while essential, can be disruptive. Since 2016, we have reduced PCS moves by utilizing Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) orders more often. Through TM, we seek to further increase PCS flexibility, balancing it with both the needs of the individual Marine's career, their family, and the service.

Childcare. High quality childcare is one of the many important child and youth programs we offer. It is a readiness priority for the Marine Corps. Our CDCs currently serve more than 30,000 children, and we have waitlists for less than 1,000 children, primarily at Camp Pendleton, Hawaii, Quantico, and Camp Lejeune/New River.

While waitlists are caused by a variety of factors, we share the national challenge of employee turnover rates. We are addressing childcare waitlist issues through emphasis on hiring efforts and a non-competitive childcare employee transfer program. We added over \$100 million to the Child and Youth Program portfolio beginning FY2023 through 2027 to hire more employees at increased wages to help retain a professional workforce. Our average CDC employee salary is now higher than those outside the gate at most installations, and direct care employees are also offered priority placement and a childcare fee discount. Many of our CDC employees are Marine spouses, which contributes to annual turnover due to PCS. To address this challenge, we have implemented a CDC employee non-competitive transfer program to enable employees to transfer from their current position to one at a different installation with ease. This has provided dividends, allowing retention of more than 180 spouse employees we may have otherwise lost. As a result of these efforts, current CDC employee turnover rate is 20%, considerably less than the 34% rate last year.

We also offer childcare fee assistance for eligible Marines who are assigned to an installation with a significant waitlist. Over the last three FYs, the rate of fee assistance utilization has increased steadily for both community-based childcare providers as well as children served. In Fiscal Year 2023, over 1,600 children were enrolled in the fee assistance program at over 620 community-based providers, at a total cost of \$6.1 million. We recently increased the maximum amount of fee assistance, which will undoubtedly help our Marine families, especially those in high-cost areas.

Spouse Employment. Spouse employment is also important for many Marine Corps families and can be a significant factor in their financial security, readiness, and retention. Family Member Employment Assistance Program is available at each Marine Corps installation and provides employment related referral services, career and skill assessments, career coaching, job search guidance, portable career opportunities, and education center referrals/guidance. We also reimburse eligible Marine spouses

up to \$1,000 for state licensure and certification costs arising from relocation to another state. We appreciate Congress' recent expansion of this program and continued support.

Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment

Sexual assault is a crime – these behaviors are antithetical to our culture of honor, courage, and commitment, and respect. The Marine Corps Sexual Assault Prevention & Response program's (SAPR) goal is to counter sexual assaults before they occur and to provide services for those affected by these crimes. We continue to encourage prevention, reporting, investigation, and prosecution of these criminal behaviors to our fullest extent. Through rigorous implementation of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC-SAM)'s recommendations as approved by the Secretary of Defense, we are striving to increase prevention and stop sexual assaults before they occur. We will also remain steadfast in holding perpetrators appropriately accountable for their crimes, and commanders and senior enlisted leaders for the climate of their unit.

We aim to identify and prevent harmful behaviors by training and educating Marines from a holistic wellness approach of mental, physical, spiritual, and social influence through the Marine Corps Total Force Fitness Program. SAPR services have also been expanded to victims of sexual harassment.

We continue to professionalize the SAPR workforce by hiring full-time employees in support of the approved IRC-SAM recommendations and prevention efforts. The Marine Corps implementation plan includes more than 350 new civilian hires in FY24, and a total of over 800 positions hired by FY27 across multiple prevention and response programs. This workforce expansion builds upon the Prevention Plan of Action. Hiring this number of personnel has illustrated the need for additional staffing for Human Resources Offices and methods to expedite the federal hiring process. The remote location of several Marine Corps installations adds to the challenge in hiring these professionals. We appreciate Congress' support as we continue these efforts.

As of December 2023, the Office of the Special Trial Counsel is fully staffed and operational worldwide. This office will professionalize prosecution of special victim offenses and strengthen victims' confidence in the military justice system by enabling independent special trial counsel to assume prosecutorial discretion over sexual assault, domestic violence, and other covered offenses. Beyond our accountability efforts, we have implemented a modernized and targeted training approach, particularly at entry-level training, to ensure all Marines are educated on standards of respect and care for their fellow Marines.

Suicide Prevention

The loss of a Marine to suicide hurts deeply. The Marine Corps continues efforts to reduce suicides through recent Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) recommendations, implementation of Marine Corps Total Fitness concept, and with our integrated and comprehensive efforts across four prevention lines of effort.

Prevention & Skill-building. Unit Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training (UMAPIT) and Operational Stress Control and Readiness training focus on primary prevention and early intervention basics. The Prevention in Action training for leaders and stakeholders provides a comprehensive approach to prevention. We seek enhanced coping and resiliency skills through stress identification and mitigation, positive psychology informed approaches to relationships and parenting, and peer-to-peer mentorship.

Application of Data & Research. An internal review board continues to identify key themes and provide actionable information. The data indicates that age, relationship distress, substance misuse, and access to lethal means are the most frequently observed factors among Marines. Based on these findings, the Marine Corps has worked to amplify Marines' knowledge and skills that sustain healthy relationships. It is also essential to help Marines struggling with substance misuse as early as possible to get them the help needed.

Communication. The Marine Corps continues to develop tools and refine communication approaches to provide more resources in the hands of leaders and Marines at all levels. We are actively implementing Brandon Act features, which ensure Marines are educated on all options to seek care, including the option to voluntarily seek help through an officer or staff NCO supervisor and initiate a referral for a mental health evaluation. In alignment with national strategies, messaging promotes and reinforces help-seeking and self-improvement, while reducing stigma. Our focus is on exposing Marines and families to available services to help navigate the stressors of life, supporting command and leadership, and encouraging positive resolution of conflict – both internal and external. An integrated prevention approach is our vision – newly released policy, resources, and new Suicide Prevention Program Coordinators are streamlining communication and outreach.

Collaboration. The Marine Corps synchronizes with Navy mental health services regularly to improve access to care and seamless transitions between services. Building on lessons learned through our implementation of IRC-SAM recommendations as approved by the Secretary of Defense, we are implementing Prevention Plan of Action 2.0, which integrates prevention of harmful behaviors linked to suicide risk, sexual assault, and other harmful behaviors. The holistic approach of Prevent Plan of

Action 2.0 will allow an overall wellness strategy that will measurably improve outcomes in concert with Marine Corps Total Fitness.

As we strive to reduce suicides, it is important to acknowledge that even with full access to help decided not to pursue it. Part of our effort will always be to get every Marine to use the care and services offered – and we need to make sure that mental health care is easily accessible. Compounding issues like nation-wide shortages of healthcare personnel and providers have created a significant problem for accessing healthcare, especially in more remote locations like Okinawa or Twentynine Palms, which impacts operational readiness. We recognize this as a problem that needs constant attention, assessment, and action.

CONCLUSION

Our highest priority and primary objective remain recruiting, developing, and retaining elite warriors in the highest state of combat readiness to support and defend this great nation. Every recruiting, retention, and talent management initiative that we undertake must demonstrably and logically contribute to readiness and lethality.

The challenges to accomplishing recruiting, retention, and talent management goals are known. We continue to recruit the best of our nation's youth to serve and incentivize the call to service to sustain our warfighting ethos and excellence, culture of performance and belonging. We must do so in an environment that has shown declining propensity and eligibility to serve. Our measure of success is a Marine Corps with improved performance and lethality in combat which enables us to fulfill your Congressional mandate to be 'most ready when the nation is least ready,' today and on the battlefields of the future. Today, we stand ready to do exactly that.

Semper Fidelis.



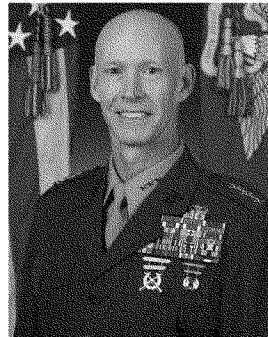
Lieutenant General James F. Glynn

Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Lieutenant General James F. Glynn currently serves as the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

A native of Albany, New York, Lieutenant General Glynn graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

Lieutenant General Glynn served as rifle platoon commander during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and 81mm mortar platoon commander with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment; as company commander and operations officer with 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment; as Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Recruiting Station, San Antonio, Texas; as Battalion Landing Team Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, with both 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) during Operation Iraqi Freedom and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable); and as Commanding Officer, Marine Special Operations School.



His staff assignments include duties at Marine Barracks 8th and 1, Washington, D.C.; Future Operations Planner (G35), I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), Fallujah, Iraq; Director, Theater Engagement and Plans (J5) and Operations Director (J3) for Theater Special Operations Command - Africa in Stuttgart, Germany; and Military Assistant to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

As a General Officer, he served as Director, Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication; Deputy Commanding General, Special Operations Joint Task Force, Operation Inherent Resolve (Forward), Baghdad, Iraq; Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina and the Eastern Recruiting Region; and Commander, Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARFORSOC).

Lieutenant General Glynn is a graduate of the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, U.S. Army War College, and Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program.

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

SUBJECT: MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE HEARING FOR FY25

STATEMENT OF:

MS KATHARINE KELLEY
DEPUTY CHIEF OF SPACE OPERATIONS FOR HUMAN
CAPITAL
UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

April 17, 2024

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

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and represent your United States Space Force. I am excited to share with you the progress of the Space Force, building and managing a force capable of securing the Nation's interest in, from and to space. Winning in space requires equipping our Guardians with the tools, talents, and experiences necessary for space superiority, and the protection of the joint force, our allies, and our partners.

THE FORCE WE NEED

The United States Space Force (USSF) operates in a unique and dynamic personnel environment. We must be able to successfully build and develop a highly-skilled, inclusive, ready, resilient, and combat-credible force.

We have engaged in a modern approach to talent management incorporating education, training, and individualized development in addition to supporting a healthy work-life balance, holistic health, and family programs. In 2023, Congress passed the Space Force Personnel Management Act. Thank you for your support with this legislation. This will enable the Space Force to build a modern personnel management system that will better allow the Space Force to develop and retain the force it needs to be competitive and successful. The permeability between full-time and part-time military service within a single component will allow Guardians the flexibility to manage their careers and better meet personal and professional goals while meeting Space Force operational needs.

To ensure our force readiness, the Space Force is making a concerted effort to increase representation on the Joint Staff and within the combatant commands. This heightened presence enables dynamic responsiveness to the growing demand for space capabilities. Talented Guardians, well-versed in space equities, will play pivotal roles in shaping the future of Space Force leadership.

The needs of the Nation require we be operationally capable of deterring conflict and defending our Nation's interests immediately and boldly. To this end, we continue developing the training, systems, and experiences necessary to be the digital force required in any potential fight.

At the same time, we are enhancing our end strength through the investment in K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), and higher education to increase our pipeline of talent, along with maximizing civilian personnel authorities. Our Guardians, both military and civilian, are our greatest strength.

END STRENGTH

The Space Force has requested 9,800 military end strength from Congress for fiscal year 2025. This is an increase of 400 from fiscal year 2024 enacted levels. We estimate that this is achievable given our understanding of today's recruiting and retention landscape for Space professionals. Also, with the enactment of the Personnel Management Act, approximately 1600 full- and part-time Air Force Reserve billets will transfer to the Space Force over the FYDP, the exact end strength for each fiscal year will depend on execution plan time-phasing. This summer we anticipate opening Tranche 1 for Air Force Reservists in Space-focused specialties who wish to transfer to a full-time USSF position.

As a result of this first window, any transfers in FY25 will be year of execution transfer. The Space Force will continue to manage military personnel inventory in support of new and evolving mission requirements to deter and defeat our adversaries in a contested space environment.

RECRUITING

The competitive market for STEM talent creates significant competition for those unique and essential capabilities necessary for the Space Force. Despite the environment, the Space Force, with the help of the Air Force Recruiting Service, exceeded our enlisted FY23 recruiting requirements by nearly 10% and are on track to meet our FY24 recruiting goals. As a Service, we have recruited exceptional talent in support of STEM and cyber-related disciplines needed to meet our complex mission set, with 99.5% of entries scoring in the upper half of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery and ~97% graduating from Basic Military Training and Tech School. While we have been successful to date, the recruiting landscape is dynamic; there is a high demand for talent in these technical communities, across the Department of Defense, the United States Government, and industry. This year, the Department of Defense's Joint Advertising Market Research Studies program indicated that the Space Force brand recognition among our target audience is at 4%. The general lack of awareness concerning the Space Force "brand," requires uniquely innovative outreach and incentive methods to attract and retain highly-qualified talent in a challenging marketplace. To establish the Space Force as a known, credible, and critical military entity, we are investing \$18 million in fiscal year 2024 to develop unique Space Force marketing efforts.

Our focus today is on expanding our reach to parents, coaches, friends, and prospective Guardians in order to ensure our talent pipeline remains robust. We are focusing investments to ensure that our nation understands what the Space Force contributes to our national security and how a Guardian career offers opportunity to serve, educate, contribute, and defend our national interests.

TAKING CARE OF GUARDIANS

Managing Talent

The Space Force continues to shape the Guardian experience and foster an organizational culture that empowers exercising mission command to secure American interests in space and contributing our unique space domain expertise in joint operations. In addition to the recently passed Space Force Personnel Management Act, which will provide flexible full- and part-time work roles to capitalize on the best and brightest, connect with industry and academia, and recruit the next generation, we are redesigning career paths to provide skills, knowledge, and experience to meet the high tech demands of our operations. Additionally, while we continue to develop a new performance appraisal system focused on contributions to team and mission, we are implementing a Guardian-centric bridging strategy for evaluations tying our values to mission accomplishment. The Space Force is setting the foundation so ALL Guardians will be better prepared to meet the high-tech, data-centric, network-intensive joint operations need for success in future campaigns.

Training and Development

The Space Force is redesigning our Officer Training Course. Under this program, all newly accessed officers will attend the same initial skills training course to learn the fundamentals of cyber operations, intelligence, and space operations. This combined initial skills training will ensure all

officers have a comprehensive operational background prior to pursuing more specialized duties like acquisition. The Space Force has also worked to establish clear delineation of the roles, responsibilities, duties, and career paths for our officer, enlisted, and civilian Guardians to optimize our force. In the next phase we will revise Guardian career paths consistent with our distinct roles of Officers, Enlisted, and Civilian Guardians. Within our noncommissioned officer (NCO) corps, we are creating enhanced leadership training at future professional military education courses that will take place at each NCO rank to set our Guardians up for success at all command and staff levels. In June 2023, the USSF established intermediate-level education and senior-level education programs in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's (JHU) School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), culminating in a Master of International Public Policy degree. The programs are offered to officers and civilians in the Space Force and other services, as well as international and interagency partners and meet service and joint professional military education requirements. This approach will allow the Space Force to tailor its education for leaders for unique space related issues and establish a mechanism whereby Guardians can earn a degree from a recognized private university. Approximately fifty students are currently enrolled in their second semester of their first year at SAIS.

Promotion and Evaluation

It is crucial that the Space Force selects the best and the brightest to help shape the space domain for the Joint fight. The Space Force promotion system is regulated by law, Department of Defense and Department of the Air Force policy. Our promotion program fulfills the requirements of section 619 of Title 10, United States Code and Secretarial policy by promoting the "best qualified" officers to positions of increased responsibility and authority. The Space Force promotion system selects the best qualified commissioned and noncommissioned officers with regard to their record, their education, their contributions and demonstrated potential. Promotion boards convened to consider officers for promotion are charged with recommending the best fully qualified officers based on this "whole-person" concept. We leverage the Air Force Personnel Center to help the Space Force execute its statutory requirements for promotion of officer, enlisted and General Officers.

Holistic Health Approach

The Space Force has implemented a Holistic Health Approach (HHA) to deliver a ready, fit, professional force supporting the wellness of each Guardian. This is an innovative, science-based approach to health, emphasizing total fitness, preventive medicine, and education. In an effort to operationalize HHA, the Space Force has established Guardian Resilience Teams (GRTs) embedded with Guardians where they work. The GRTs consist of multidisciplinary subject matter experts, health integrator and physical, mental, and spiritual health providers. Over the past year, the Space Force has stood-up nine GRTs located at every Space Force Base, the National Capital Region, Joint Base San Antonio/Basic Military Training, and a remote GRT for geographically separated units and remote Guardians.

In support of HHA, the Space Force, in partnership with the Air Force Research Lab, began a two-year study of our service's Continuous Fitness Assessment, to assess the effectiveness of continuous fitness in meeting HHA goals and physical fitness requirements. Over 7,000 of our uniformed Guardians, representing 85% of our total force, registered to participate in the study.

PAY AND COMPENSATION

The Space Force is dedicated to ensuring all Guardians are appropriately compensated for their service. Military compensation must be designed to recruit and retain talent. The Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation scheduled to conclude at the end of the calendar year, will be a critical forum to explore and develop innovative pay structures that make sense for today's military and the Space Force.

Total compensation -- including basic pay, the basic allowance for housing, the basic allowance for subsistence, health care benefits, retirement benefits, the tax advantage of entitlements, special and incentive pay and bonuses -- has greatly helped the Space Force manage existing talent. This network of pay, allowances, and other benefits is designed to compare favorably with private industry and civilian employment; however, given the highly technical workforce that makes up our Guardians, we must ensure salaries are competitive with commensurate civilian positions.

There remains an extremely high demand for talent in information and cyber warfare communities across the Department of Defense, the U.S. Government, and the commercial and private sectors. To support Guardian retention, the Space Force is offering Selective Retention Bonuses, Special Duty Assignment Pays, and Assignment Incentive Pays, to attract, compensate, and retain our highly-skilled workforce. The use of these incentives in critical Space Force specialties and locations assists in the ability to counter retention challenges at a relatively low cost when compared to the cost of replacing Guardians lost to other organizations, industry, or the private sector.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SUPPORT

The Space Force was established to be a mission-focused, agile force. As such, we continue to receive support from the Department of the Air Force in a wide range of activities and programs to include family care, well-being, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Additionally, the six Space Force bases have approximately 8,000 Airmen providing base operating support to include finance, contracting, education and training, child and youth services, dining, fitness, logistics, communications, medical services, emergency services, and base security. We are a one team-one fight organization and are grateful for the continued efforts of all members of our team.

Quality of Life

Force readiness requires the recruitment and retention of superior personnel who are continuously able to perform their responsibilities. By empowering Guardians to maintain focus on the mission while enabling Guardians and their families, caregivers, and survivors to thrive, we believe our force is stronger. The Space Force is prioritizing child care and spouse employment in its efforts to improve and sustain quality of life for all.

The Space Force is working directly with the Air Force to maximize available, affordable, and quality child care options that allow Guardians to remain mission-focused, while also allowing spouses to pursue career opportunities. We are working to improve access to child care, increasing staffing incentives, adding family child care providers, developing education and marketing materials, increasing community-based fee assistance, and targeted construction investments. Recently, Buckley Space Force Base hosted a hiring event that resulted in a child care vacancy reduction of 25%, with fifteen new hires, and reduced the days to hire from forty-four days to fifteen days. This aims to reduce the child care waitlist significantly, with initial projections anticipating a

significant increase in direct care staffing from 49% to 73% within one month, the largest gain in three years. Patrick Space Force Base, the Child Development Center increased capacity for children ages 6-12 years old, but continues to seek qualified individuals to fill 10 staff vacancies to improve availability for younger children. Additionally, the Space Force has established a quarterly "Child Care Community Forum," opened to every Guardian: leader, parent, and member (military, civilian, household) to educate and engage with Guardians on child care programs, services and information. The Space Force is focused on continuing to characterize the unique aspects of Guardians' child care needs to develop future child care support strategies.

The Space Force recognizes that spouse employment is a significant factor in the family decision to continue military service. The Space Force has established the Guardian Family Career Program, which offers spouses the opportunity to support fellow Guardians while advancing their careers with pre-identified remote or portable positions from one Space Force installation to the next. Opportunities are available at all levels and meet the spouse where they are in terms of experience and professional interest. As a part of this program, we recently released a new policy authorizing up to five days of PCS-related administrative leave for Civilian Guardians listed as dependents on their military or civilian spouse's PCS orders in an effort to support families as they navigate career related moves.

CONCLUSION

Your Guardians, both military and civilian members, are preserving U.S. freedom of action in an increasingly contested space domain. This requires a military force specifically trained and equipped for the purpose. U.S. projection for space supremacy demands space capabilities our Guardians provide to this nation. Developing our force, both military and civilian, is a national imperative and a once in a lifetime opportunity. Guardian talent and expertise is our most important operational advantage. Additionally, amplifying the Guardian Spirit starts with taking care of our personnel and shaping their experiences. Doing so unleashes the creativity, innovation, determination, and patriotism of our force. We thank you for your continued support for our Space Force, its uniformed and civilian Guardians, and their families, caregivers, and survivors.



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

KATHARINE KELLEY

Ms. Katharine Kelley, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital, U.S. Space Force. She provides executive leadership and managerial direction for the Space Force in all functional areas of personnel management to include force structure analysis; personnel programs; civilian personnel; readiness; senior officer matters; quality force issues; equal opportunity; and family support for military and civilian personnel located at 175 locations worldwide in support of the service's space launch, space surveillance, missile warning, and satellite command and control operations.



Ms. Kelley earned a commission through the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Villanova University as a Logistics Officer for the 1st Infantry Division. She transitioned to a civilian role within the Department of the Army working the most comprehensive base realignment and closure process in the department's history, as well as managing logistics, enterprise infrastructure, and space management. In 2016 Ms. Kelley assumed responsibilities as Superintendent at Arlington National Cemetery where she was responsible for rebuilding trust and confidence in the Army's operation of the cemetery and setting the strategic direction for recapitalization, expansion and technology innovations. Prior to her current position, Ms. Kelley served as the Chief Human Capital Officer for Army Futures Command. There, she stood up the command's headquarters in Austin, TX and served as the senior advisor on all aspects of human resources including the establishment of the Army's first software focused training for soldiers and civilians.

EDUCATION

1999 Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Villanova University, Villanova PA
2003 Masters of Arts in International Relations, University of Oklahoma, Heidelberg GE
2012 Masters of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies, U.S. Naval War College, Newport RI

ASSIGNMENTS

1999-2003, Logistics Officer, European Command, J4 & 1st Infantry Division - Stuttgart GE
2004-2007, Business Process Associate, Booz Allen Hamilton - Washington DC
2007-2008, Strategic Planner, Army Materiel Command - Ft Belvoir VA
2008-2011, Chief, Base Realignment and Closure, Army Materiel Command - Ft. Belvoir VA
2012-2013, Chief, Standards and Evaluation, Arlington National Cemetery - Arlington, VA
2013-2014, Director, Enterprise Management, Information Technology Agency - Pentagon
2014-2016, Chief of Staff, Headquarters Services, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army - Pentagon
2016-2019, Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery - Arlington, VA
2019-2022, Chief Human Capital Officer, Army Futures Command - Austin TX
2022-Present, Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital, U.S. Space Force - Pentagon

AWARDS AND HONORS:

- Naval War College's James D. Forrestal Award for Excellence in Force Planning
- Distinguished Civilian Service Medal (2nd award)
- Meritorious Civilian Service Award (2nd award)
- Superior Civilian Service Award (3rd award)
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- Joint Service Medal

(Current as of September 2022)

PAIRS CASE 2024-C-0395

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

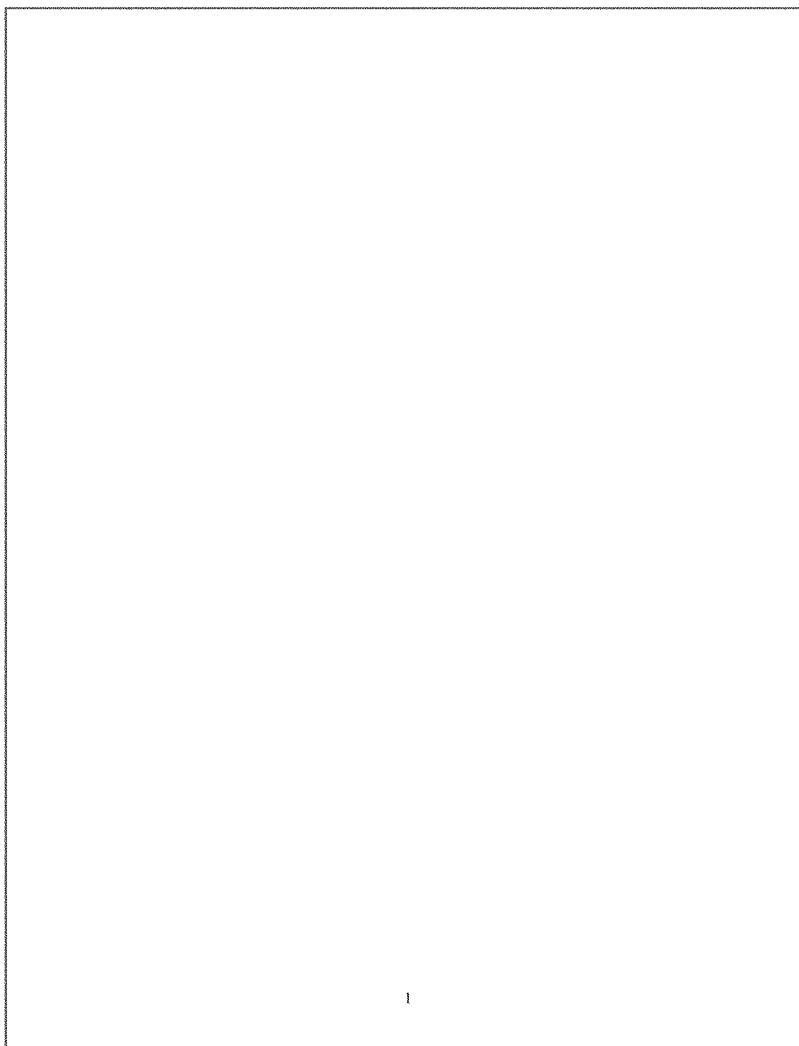
SUBJECT: MILITARY DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL POSTURE HEARING

STATEMENT OF:

LIEUTENANT GENERAL CAROLINE M. MILLER
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER,
PERSONNEL AND SERVICES

April 17, 2024

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



INTRODUCTION

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support. I am honored to share the United States Air Force's continuing efforts to build and maintain critical Airmen readiness across the human resources portfolio.

As the Department of the Air Force (DAF) looks to the future, readiness stands as the cornerstone of our mission. In today's dynamic landscape, readiness goes beyond our platforms, lethality of our pilots and the number of weapons in our inventory; arguably, the most important critical factor to readiness is our human weapon system: our Airmen.

Cultivating the next generation of Airmen through enhanced talent management initiatives is our top priority. Through innovative programs such as the Pathfinder Program, technical tracks and the civilian program STELLAR FORCE 2030, the USAF will foster specialized expertise and promote a culture of continuous learning. We must maintain optimal end strength, aligning manpower to future force structures and modernization efforts. Additionally, we continue to analyze and refine recruitment & retention strategies and accession standards, adapting to evolving demographic and societal trends while maintaining our commitment to excellence across all facets of our force structure.

The DAF also continues to strengthen a resilient and adaptable force. Our comprehensive approach reflects our unwavering dedication to care and support for Airmen, Guardians and their families, ensuring they are equipped to thrive in an ever-changing landscape while upholding mission readiness and success.

OUR FORCE NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE: To ensure readiness, we must have a robust, dynamic, well-developed, and technically proficient total force encompassing Active Duty, Reservists, Air National Guardsmen, and civilians prepared for any peer adversary.

GROW THE FUTURE AIRMAN

It is imperative that we continue to grow the future force we need to prevail against our peer competitors, China and Russia. We are dedicated to developing Airmen with specialized skills for strategic solutions and create alternate career paths focused on technical expertise.

The Pathfinder Program, initiated by the Secretary of the Air Force and propelled by General Allvin during his tenure as the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, cultivates Airmen with distinctive expertise, able to devise transformative solutions to enhance the Air Force's competitive edge. This initiative is designed to find and cultivate talent among our officer, enlisted and civilian corps, unbound by traditional career paths. These uniquely skilled and innovative Airmen will focus on strategic Air Force priorities while maintaining current functional expertise. We selected the first cohort in 2023 to work on complex problems throughout the enterprise.

We implemented the officer technical track this year: a small cohort of Cyberspace Operations officers focused on strengthening specialized expertise in emerging technology. The first cohort all have assignments for summer of 2024 at which time they will hone their technical expertise, focused on mission accomplishment and leading operational-level technical missions. In addition to this small

cohort, we are expanding officer technical tracks in other critical areas to support the re-optimization for great power competition efforts and are analyzing data to determine feasibility of enlisted technical tracks.

The DAF is also applying principles of learning engineering to optimize force development. Our Air Force continues to capitalize on technological advances to make training more effective and efficient. The Air Education and Training Command is using the Maintenance Operations Training Augmented Reality (MOTAR) program to bring virtual reality “game like” training solutions to Ready Airmen Training. Virtual Reality environments complement, and supplement limited hands-on equipment, such as aircraft engines, allowing Airmen to gain increased touch time when the physical engine is occupied by other students.

Furthermore, our leader development courses are using Leading Inclusively Virtual Experience (LIVE) to provide a virtual simulated experience, including scenarios for leaders to train and practice human interactions. We continue to explore Artificial Intelligence tools in the Human Capital domain to augment data-driven decisions and enhance—not replace—military judgement to develop our Airmen.

DELIBERATELY MANAGE AIR FORCE TALENT

Talent management is the cornerstone to develop the force we need. We’ve successfully implemented a complete overhaul of our Officer and Enlisted Performance Evaluation Systems. We have aligned our evaluations with Airman Leadership Qualities, representing performance characteristics critically important to define, develop, incentivize and measure our Airmen. Our goal is to develop mission-focused Airmen and reinforce the behaviors valued by the Air Force across all enlisted and officer ranks. We have already realized positive results of these changes across the force.

In the fall, we conducted a beta test to standardize qualitative feedback for Airmen meeting their Squadron Command board. This initiative, recommended by the Independent Review Commission, was directed to better assess Airmen into Command positions. The hiring authorities were required to review qualitative data and conduct interviews prior to selection for key leadership positions. The success of the test also provided information to identify developmental opportunities. The new process was approved for implementation starting in September 2024.

We continue to focus on Coaching and Mentoring, recognizing the importance to create an enterprise in which a coaching culture is the norm. To increase internal DAF coaches, we have extended our contracts with reputable private-sector coaching entities and through International Coaching Federation-accredited coach training. Our desired end state is to have Airmen who understand, value and use formal and/or informal coaching to enhance the development of DAF professionals in support of our mission.

CIVILIAN TALENT MANAGEMENT

To maintain our competitive advantage, we must acquire and retain civilian talent. This year, the DAF established Human Capital Management Guiding Principles to focus on our priorities in talent acquisitions and foster agility and innovation. The principles are: Recognize the Civilian Force as Integral to the Total Force, Prioritize Capability, Relentless Pursuit of Competitive Advantage, Enable DAF Leadership Vision, Embrace IT Modernization, Collaborate Across Services, Uphold Professional

Standards, Prioritize Airmen and Families' Well-Being and Promote Diversity. These guiding principles will bolster the strength of our civilian workforce to enhance DAF readiness and competitiveness.

The guiding principles are the foundation for the DAF STELLAR FORCE 2030 initiative. This initiative aims to revolutionize civilian talent management practices by harnessing collective knowledge and expertise to drive meaningful improvements in talent acquisition, development, and retention. STELLAR FORCE 2030 is a call to innovate across the DAF, encouraging the human resource community and functional communities to submit proposals and ideas to enhance civilian talent management. We are collaborating with the Department of Defense and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop new policies to enable more effective civilian talent management.

We continue to focus our attention in the air operations community to pursue enhanced mission responsiveness. Our efforts include working with OPM to revise classification and qualification standards for pilot and simulator instructor trainees, seeking to improve the recruitment of new pilots. This will enhance competitiveness and remove outdated criteria that hinder our ability to attract and retain personnel.

END STRENGTH

The Air Force end-strength strategy must address crucial gaps in our warfighting capabilities, enhancing our ability to meet the strategic challenges in a time of Great Power Competition (GPC). We actively seek opportunities to divest capabilities not aligned with this challenge, focusing instead on bolstering capabilities crucial for executing the National Defense Strategy and GPC optimization. Moreover, our end-strength strategy emphasizes ensuring we have the optimal mix of skilled personnel in the appropriate roles and at the right time, thereby enhancing our readiness and agility in this dynamic strategic landscape.

Our FY25 total force end strength facilitates the human capital strategy to support future force structure including modernization in programs such as the B-21 Raider, KC-46A, F-35 and Electronic Warfare Integrated program. We continue to strategically divest our legacy platforms to redirect manpower to critical modern aircraft and platforms required to win in the new competitive environment. Taking near-term measured risks allows us to ensure critical operations capabilities and future functions to support GPC.

The 494,700 Total Force end strength represents the Airmen we need right now to continue to execute current missions, while we also plan for and begin to transition to the force of the future.

RECRUITING

FY23 was a challenging recruiting year; for the first time in 24 years, we did not meet recruiting goals in the Active Duty, Guard and Reserve. We examined our internal accession requirement policies: tattoos, body composition, drug testing, etc., to determine opportunities to reach the current population. Propensity to serve remains historically low hovering between 9 and 12 percent. Additionally, those who have a parent who served are more likely to join and this number has declined from 40 percent in 1995 to just 12 percent in 2022. To ensure policies keep pace with the changing generation, DAF initiated a Barriers to Service working group to holistically review our policies. The group identified 19

accession policies we've updated, providing approximately 6,800 people the opportunity to serve their country as Airmen. The quality of recruits has remained unchanged with 80% of recruits in the 1-3A category (scoring 50 or above on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)) and our Active component has accepted no recruits in Category 4 (scoring 30 or lower on the ASVAB).

We are cautiously optimistic we will meet FY24 recruiting goals due to modification of our policies. We established the FY24 Active Duty enlisted recruiting goal at 26,000; the ANG goal at 8,494; and the AFR goal at 5,700. For Active Duty, in response to observed declines in current year retention averages and to help offset potential future retention trend declines, we recently increased the recruiting goal by 1,200 (from 26,000 to 27,200). The change is part of a larger force management strategy that involves additional retention programs designed to deliver the right number of Airmen to match future force structure within authorized end strength throughout the FYDP.

Additionally, our goal is to add a total of 3,534 new officers from all accession sources across the total force. Five months into the fiscal year, we are experiencing positive trends. The Active Duty Air Force continues to meet its monthly enlisted and officer accession goals and is over 12% higher than the same time last year. The Reserve component is also meeting its enlisted accession goal, a full 36% higher than last year. Reserve officer accession is currently below its year-to-date goal; however, it is 6.3% higher than last year. Finally, while the ANG is not currently meeting its year-to-date enlisted and officer recruitment goals, they are seeing approximately 15% gains over last year.

Overall, the US Air Force recruiting program is healthy, determined by how far in the future we are filling and the size of our Delayed Entry Program (DEP). We are currently filling slots 2 to 2.5 months in the future and continue rebuilding our DEP from 4,600 in the beginning of FY23 to current rate of 8,900. Overall, we see no reason why the positive recruiting trends will not continue throughout the rest of the year.

RETENTION

As the US Air Force shifts towards a more modernized model of warfighting, retaining our talented Airmen is a priority. Officer and enlisted personnel retention rates continue to decline—less than a percentage point per year—however, this is not unexpected, as they normalize to pre-COVID historical average rates. We are actively implementing programs to manage the force to our desired retention levels and remain committed to an optimal balance of officers and enlisted personnel across a range of functions in response to the demands of a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

The Air Force continues to offer targeted monetary incentives to address retention challenges. This year, we are expanding our Selective Retention Bonus (SRB) program for an additional 19 jobs in FY24. SRB targets capabilities in the enlisted Air Force Specialty Codes with low manning percentages and high training costs such as special warfare, aircraft maintenance, cyber and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. For FY24, we programed \$172M to incentivize retention and are planning on maintaining the \$172M amount for FY25.

Additionally, we are continuing our two Active-Duty Aviation Bonus (AVB) programs: the FY24 Experienced Aviator Retention Incentive (EARI) and the FY24 Demonstration Bonus (Demo). The two

AVB programs have been highly effective; in FY23 we retained an additional 380 pilots compared to previous years when only the legacy bonus program was offered. The financial analysis of the FY23 Demo program indicates a positive return on investment. The Air Force spends \$40M per pilot in training and retention costs to develop 10-year experienced pilots while the cost of the FY23 Demo program was an additional \$52.3M to retain the additional pilots.

FORCE RESILIENCE

The DAF places a high priority on the well-being of its Airmen, Guardians, and families as they are our most significant competitive advantage. We continually assess our family programs to modernize existing services, introduce new solutions and innovate to address evolving priorities. The DAF ensures individuals seeking assistance for financial, transitional or health issues are viewed as a positive sign of resilience. The Air Force is dedicated to supporting families by providing tailored support and resources, including economic security, childcare and spouse employment. Additionally, we actively work to counter sexual assault and harassment through prevention strategies, together with implementing strategies for suicide prevention, such as promoting safe firearms storage and conducting reviews of suicide cases to identify actionable recommendations. Through these multifaceted efforts, the DAF seeks to cultivate a supportive environment where Airmen, Guardians, and their families can thrive, ensuring mission readiness and success.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

We appreciate your support through the FY24 NDAA Basic Pay, Basic Allowance for Housing and Subsistence increases. The Basic Allowance for Housing increase provides much needed relief in these challenging economic times.

We believe we have a competitively compensated force; however, our increasingly educated and skilled enlisted corps demands we continue to evaluate their compensation structure. We look forward to the 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) results, due to be completed by January 2025. As we are awaiting results, the DAF finalized several initiatives which helped off-set the additional costs associated with military life. In FY23, we restored Special Duty Assignment Pay, funding it at \$11M in FY23, \$95.2M in FY24 and an estimated \$91.3M for FY25. We increased the temporary lodging expense reimbursement from 10 to 14 days for CONUS PCS and from 5 to 7 days for OCONUS PCS and increased Dislocation Allowance for E-1 through E-6. While this added an additional \$18.3M to our FY25 budget request, it is necessary to ensure the financial security of our service members during PCS moves.

The DAF was the first Service to implement the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) in January 2023 to address the needs of our most at-risk Airmen. Paid to Airmen with a gross total household income of 150% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) or less, the typical BNA recipient is a married E-4 with six or more dependents receiving an average \$1,687 per month. Currently, 37 Airmen are receiving BNA: with 44 Airmen receiving the allowance since its inception. The DAF requested \$40.3M in the FY25 President's Budget, attributed to the anticipated increase in potentially eligible Service members when the FY 2025 legislative proposal proposed by the Administration is enacted to include service members below 200% of FPG. The DAF identified approximately 1,400 service members potentially eligible based on their military compensation alone. We anticipate the final figures will be lower once total

family household income is determined.

The DAF diligently continues to address the financial requirements of our Service members. The Air Force's Military and Family Readiness Centers (M&FRC) are the on-base service member and family touchpoint providing education, counseling and referral services to families with economic and food security concerns. We started enterprise-level tracking in August 2021—M&FRCs received 345 visits for food insecurity, 50% of which occurred in FY23. In addition to our M&FRCs, our command teams and First Sergeants network continue to be incredibly valuable resources for our struggling families. They assist in locating available sources to include the Air Force Aide Society, which provided \$279,346 in food assistance to 1,347 Service members.

CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

In addition to economic security, childcare is one of the most critical issues for service members and their families. Available, affordable, quality childcare programs are critical to support families, enable our service members to focus on the mission, and have direct readiness and retention impacts. In 2023, the DAF Child and Youth Programs (CYP) provided care or support through to 52,061 children. These programs include DAF-operated Child Development Centers (CDC), DAF-certified Family Childcare (FCC) providers, Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) community fee assistance and several DAF/DoD pilot programs.

The DAF addresses the availability and delivery of CYPs with targeted efforts to maximize available childcare options, expand childcare capacity, increase DAF childcare program awareness and leverage customer feedback to determine needs as outlined in the DAF 2021 Childcare Strategic Plan.

The unmet child care needs waitlist is trending favorably down, decreasing between 25 and 33%, back to pre-COVID levels. The unmet needs waitlist consists of children who were not placed in care the day after care was needed, with approximately 3,700 children on that list currently awaiting placement at a DAF CDC or FCC program. The average wait across all priorities categories is 137 days, with single/dual military families waiting an average of 62 days for placement.

The DAF experienced post-pandemic childcare staffing shortages as did the entire childcare industry. Direct care staffing rates at DAF CDCs fell to 65% in July 2022, resulting in critical room closures, increased wait times and families struggling to secure care. During FY23, the DAF continued offering monetary and non-monetary incentives to attract and retain direct care staff—the most popular being the 100% child care tuition discount for the first child of direct-care staff. Additional children of direct-care staff and non-direct-care staff receive a 25% tuition discount. Additional staff incentives included retention bonuses, employee referral bonuses and tuition assistance. The DAF has experienced steady growth in CDC staffing rates since July 2022, from 65% in July 2022 to 80% by October 2023. Our staffing levels remain robust, ranging from 79% to 81%, reflecting our collective efforts and commitment to ensure the highest quality of care is provided. Approximately 3% (\$15M) of the Child and Youth Program FY25 budget request is earmarked for staffing initiatives to continue providing the highest quality of care.

We are also focused on our FCC provider program. The FCC caregivers are the primary delivery system

for expanded care needs for members whose childcare needs are outside of the traditional model such as 24/7 duty, shift work, part-time/hourly and specialized care options. We used targeted FCC recruitment and retention incentives, resulting in an increase of our program to 435 homes at 61 installations, up 14% from FY22.

Another program is the MCCYN program. This provides fee assistance to service members who are not located near base-care options or where base space is unavailable. In FY23, \$28.1M supported 6,700 DAF children at nationally accredited child care centers across the country. For FY24, we requested \$30.4M; in FY25, we increased our request to \$31.5M. Continued investment in our providers, facilities and programs is essential to grow the availability of quality and affordable childcare services for our families and ensure the health of the CYP.

Dedicated military construction (MILCON) projects and Facility Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernizations (FSRM) funds are as critical as staffing initiatives and fee assistance. We are grateful for the FY22 and FY23 appropriations for nine MILCON projects at JBSA-Lackland, Sheppard AFB, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, RAF Lakenheath, Osan AB (Host-Nation funded), JBSA-Randolph, Scott AFB and two projects at Wright-Patterson AFB, as well as additional Planning and Design funding, and additional funding for four Cost to Completes. The FY24 NDAA-authorized amounts included a Cost to Complete request (\$20M) for the CDC at JBSA-Lackland, authorized and appropriated in FY22, and a net-zero facility CDC at Hanscom AFB (\$37.0M). In the June 2023 update to the Child and Youth Facility Master Plan, the DAF identified 35 CDC requirements, including 11 MILCON projects totaling \$367.4M, which are authorized and appropriated. An additional 11 are in the design phase and a final 12 projects are currently in the planning phase.

The DAF is addressing child care facility condition concerns with FSRM funding. In FY24, we set aside \$46M in focused FSRM funding for 11 CDC projects. In FY25 we are targeting to increase to \$50M for focused investment in CDCs. Additionally, installations receive discretionary sustainment funding for routine preventative maintenance and repair for facility projects with costs below the thresholds for centralized funding. Finally, there are additional projects executed under a Non-Appropriated Funds memorandum of agreement totaling \$27.85M, including CDCs at Grand Forks AFB (\$8.1M), Hurlburt Field (\$3.41M), McConnell AFB (\$8.5M) and Altus AFB (\$7.85M).

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

Spouse employment is a critical element to family resilience, financial readiness, quality of life, retention and mission success. Military spouse unemployment rate remains at 21%--significantly higher than the 3.9% country-wide unemployment rate published by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. The unemployment rate for spouses of enlisted Airmen is 4% higher than spouses of officers with the highest unemployment rate among spouses of Airmen in the ranks of E-1 to E-4 (26%). There are multiple factors impacting spouse employment to include local CONUS job markets, transferring state licensures/certifications, overseas employment & telework restrictions for spouses overseas and the cost and availability of childcare.

The DAF relies on a variety of initiatives to counter spouse employment issues and contribute to our families' economic security. The M&FRC serves as a connector to extensive DAF and DoD resources

available to assist with spouse employment and has been instrumental to assist 43 DAF spouse education/career courses. Additionally, in FY22, the Military Licensure Reimbursement program was initiated, followed by the Spouse Small Business Reimbursement Program in 2023, in which relocation costs up to \$1000 are reimbursed. In the FY25 budget request, the DAF has set aside \$2M for both programs to offset the cost of PCS moves on spouses and encourage continued spouse employment.

Additional initiatives include the Military Spouse Employment Partnership and the My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA), which assists active-duty military spouses in obtaining a license, certification or associate degree necessary to gain employment in an occupation or career field. The Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot (MSCAP), launched in December 2022, provides active, National Guard and Reserve spouses with a 12-week paid fellowship program with industry, blending professional development, networking and hands-on experience. The pilot lasts for 3 years; to date, 425 spouses have been placed into fellowships with 85% of fellows offered follow-on employment with an average starting salary of \$67K.

COMBATTING SEXUAL ASSAULT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The DAF strategy to address sexual assault and harassment is a multidisciplinary approach focusing on prevention, response and accountability. We focus on the entire continuum of harm—addressing reports of sexual assault and associated experiences of retaliation to maintain the ready, diverse and lethal force required to defend our Nation. This approach includes a wide range of policies, programs and training reinforcing the DAF commitment to counter sexual assault, thereby enhancing accountability, prevention, climate and culture and victim care and support. The DAF recognizes we have more work to accomplish to detect changes in climate and educate commanders on the impact of harmful behaviors on victims and how a holistic climate and culture is critical to mission readiness. We must identify individual and environmental factors responsible for creating toxic conditions that degrade our culture of care. We continue to address training efficacy to equip leaders at all levels to promote a positive unit climate and cultivate environments that protect Airmen and Guardians from sexual assault, sexual harassment and retaliation.

The DAF continues to work on the DoD four-tiered implementation plan based on the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC-SAM). On December 27, 2023, we reached full operational capability of our Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC) to oversee the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault and other covered offenses. The DAF published updated Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) policy with changes for best practices regarding: Restricted (confidential) and Unrestricted Reporting options; SAPR victim advocacy services for DAF service members experiencing military sexual harassment; Installation Commander roles and responsibilities related to SAPR program location and office requirements; Convalescent leave options for victims of sexual assault; and Safe-to-Report policy changes. By integrating IRC-SAM recommendations, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, we are reaffirming to all Airmen and Guardians that we are striving to counter sexual assault by fostering an equitable culture of dignity and mutual respect.

The IRC-SAM recommendations, approved by the Secretary of Defense, led to the co-location of support agencies, coined the “connect to care” collaborative approach. Centralizing the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, SAPR Victim Advocate supporting sexual harassment advocacy, Domestic Abuse Victim

Advocate, Victim's Counsel and Religious Support Teams improves the ease of access when coordinating victim support. The pilot program launched by the DAF at six installations between August 2022 and January 2023 reported a 22% increase in collaboration, coordination, consistency, awareness and access since the start of the pilot. The success was codified into policy and is being implemented DAF-wide. Another training effort includes the launch of the Integrated Prevention Course at Air University and the development of annual SAPR training targeted for General Officers and Senior Executive Service civilians which was developed and deployed DAF-wide in FY23.

The DAF is committed to fill the 769 additional billets authorized by the Secretary of Defense. As of February 2024, we have filled 457 positions. The DAF is committed to strengthening the full-time response workforce structure to ensure critical support and experienced advocates are available to provide continuity of care. We continuously seek to learn and understand that prevention and response to sexual assault requires leadership focus and is a vital command responsibility. Through engaged and equipped service members and leaders at all levels, we are committed to preventing and reducing sexual assault while ensuring that victims receive care and perpetrators are held appropriately accountable.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

According to the DoD Annual Report on Suicide in the Military Calendar Year (CY) 2022 released on 30 October 2023, suicide rates in the Air Force declined from a rate of 25.1 per 100K Active Component service members in CY19 to 24.3 in CY20 and 15.3 in CY21. In CY22, this number saw a slight increase to 19.7 per 100K, consistent with the Air Force average rate over the past 5 years. In comparison, the DoD Active Component suicide rate for 2022 was 25.1 per 100K. After controlling for differences in age and sex, the Active Duty, Reserve and Guard suicide rates are comparable to US population suicide rates. Use of a firearm was the most common method of suicide, which is consistent with previous years. The largest demographic of suicides continues to be single, enlisted men, under the age of 30, in the rank of E-1 through E-4, which is consistent with previous years and to the overall demographic profile of the DoD total force.

One of the Air Force's initiatives started in March 2022, the Time-Based Prevention (TBP), focuses on promoting safe storage of personal firearms to put time and space between an Airman or Guardian who is at risk for suicide and has access to lethal means. With the establishment of a centralized contract to facilitate the purchase and distribution of cable-style gun locks, more than 280K have been distributed across the DAF to date. Continued implementation, expansion and leadership support will build a culture in which safe storage is commonplace, which will accelerate efforts to save lives by reducing immediate access to firearms for those in distress and helping to prevent accidental injuries and deaths among DAF members and their families.

The first standardized, unified, scientific and public health-driven methodology for suicide death reviews in the DAF was completed for CY20. In partnership with suicide researchers at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), the DAF systematically analyzed factors to identify aggregated findings & lessons and deliver generalizable & actionable recommendations to reduce suicide. Researchers drew information from four sources, including personnel records, investigation reports, medical records and DoD Suicide Event Reports (DoDSER), collecting over 1,000 data points for each suicide decedent. USUHS researchers piloted the Suicide Analysis Board (SAB) process this past year on

117 suicide deaths from 2020. The final report was released in March 2024 with 68 recommendations; future studies will look at deaths from calendar years 2018, 2019, 2021 and beyond to provide additional data and recommendations as we strive toward zero deaths by suicide. The DAF is focused on implementing those recommendations, many of which are already underway, to include conducting a lethal means safety campaign, continuing to promote lethal means safety practices and focusing on programs that build connections. The Wingman Guardian Connect Program is one effective program already established that helps Airmen and Guardians build the skills to form connections. An additional training effort includes the launch of the Integrated Prevention Course at Air University and the development of annual suicide prevention training targeted for General Officers and Senior Executive Service civilians which was developed and deployed DAF-wide in FY23.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you again for this opportunity to represent our distinguished service members and their families. We remain committed to recruiting, retaining, developing and employing the force needed to complete our mission in service of our country. I am honored for this opportunity to provide insight into the quality of service and quality of life of our service members, which directly impacts the mission readiness of our force. We look forward to our continued partnership and appreciate your advocacy of the US Air Force—those in uniform, our civilian professionals and the families, caregivers and survivors who support them.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL CAROLINE M. MILLER

Lt. Gen. Caroline Miller is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia. Lt. Gen. Miller 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.

Lt. Gen. Miller commissioned from Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in 1994. She has held several command and staff positions at the base, major command, Air Staff and Joint levels. Her command tours include the 1st Mission Support Squadron, 1st Force Support Squadron, 379th Expeditionary Mission Support Group and 633rd Air Base Wing.

Prior to her current position, Lt. Gen. Miller served as the Commander of the 502nd Air Base Wing at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas.

EDUCATION

- 1990 Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif.
- 1992 Master of Arts, Experimental Psychology, American University, Washington, D.C.
- 1999 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 2002 Master of Arts, Organizational Management, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
- 2006 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence
- 2007 Master of Arts, National Security and Strategic Studies, Naval Command and Staff College, Newport, R.I.
- 2010 Master of Arts, Strategic Studies, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. June 1994–December 1995, Squadron Section Commander, 3rd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska
- 2. December 1995–May 1996, Chief, Personnel Readiness, 3rd Mission Support Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
- 3. May 1996–May 1997, Chief, Customer Support, 3rd Mission Support Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
- 4. June 1997–May 1999, Executive Support Officer, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
- 5. May 1999–July 2000, Special Actions Officer, Headquarters Air Combat Command Commander's Action Group, Langley AFB, Va.
- 6. July 2000–May 2002, Student, Air Force Intern Program, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
- 7. May 2002–June 2004, Flight Commander, Military Personnel Flight, Headquarters Air Force Office of Special Investigation, Andrews AFB, Md.
- 8. June 2004–September 2005, Executive Officer, Air Force Senior Leader Management Office, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
- 9. September 2005–May 2006, Assistant Executive Officer, Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
- 10. May 2006–June 2007, Student, Naval Command and Staff College, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
- 11. June 2007–April 2008, Commander, 1st Mission Support Squadron, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
- 12. April 2008–July 2009, Commander, 1st Force Support Squadron, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
- 13. July 2009–April 2010, Director of Staff, 633rd Air Base Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
- 14. April 2010–May 2011, Student, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 15. June 2011–June 2012, Executive Officer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
- 16. June 2012–July 2014, Director, Manpower and Personnel, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.
- 17. July 2014–July 2015, Commander, 379th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, Al Udeid Air



EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant	
January 21, 1994	
First Lieutenant	
January 21, 1996	
Captain	
January 21, 1998	
Major	
April 01, 2004	
Lieutenant Colonel	
June 01, 2008	
Colonel	
October 01, 2013	
Brigadier General	
July 03, 2019	
Lieutenant General	
May 26, 2022	

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CAROLINE M. MILLER

Base, Qatar

18. July 2015–June 2017, Commander, 633rd Air Base Wing, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

19. June 2017–June 2019, Chief, Senate Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

20. June 2019–June 2020, Director of Manpower, Organization and Resources, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

21. June 2020–May 2022, Commander, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio, Texas

22. May 2022–present, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, The Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 2012–July 2014, Director of Manpower and Personnel, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., as a colonel

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal

Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters

Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster

Joint Meritorious Unit Award

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with three oak leaf clusters

Air Force Organizational Excellence Award with oak leaf cluster

National Defense Service Medal

Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant Jan. 21, 1994

First Lieutenant Jan. 21, 1996

Captain Jan. 21, 1998

Major April 1, 2004

Lieutenant Colonel June 1, 2008

Colonel Oct. 1, 2013

Brigadier General July 3, 2019

Lieutenant General May 26, 2022

(Current as of June 2022)



**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

APRIL 17, 2024

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. TOKUDA

General STITT. The Army implemented the military justice reform requirements, including the Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC), through structural change focusing on independence, building expertise, and preserving the Army's commitment to good order and discipline. Through targeted personnel growth, the Army is increasing expertise in special victim litigation, holding offenders accountable, and providing transparency for victims as cases progress through the military justice system. The OSTC utilizes a three-tiered structure, with:

(1) a headquarters element in the National Capitol Region, (2) eight circuits, and (3) teams of special trial counsel and support personnel located at 28 installations with world-wide coverage. The organization includes approximately 160 personnel, including 63 certified special trial counsel. The Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program is actively incorporating reforms derived from the 90-Day-Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military Services.

As part of these efforts, the Army is introducing SHARP Prevention Specialists at each installation for the first time since the program's inception. To date, we have recruited and onboarded 10 SHARP Program Prevention Specialists. These specialists are tasked with spearheading the planning, execution, coordination, and evaluation of prevention activities, encompassing policies, programs, and practices.

Their responsibilities extend to providing training, education, and outreach initiatives focused on the prevention of sexual harassment and assault. Collaboration with various stakeholders such as the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group (IPAG), Family Advocacy Program, Behavioral Health, and Equal Opportunity enhances the effectiveness of their efforts. By deploying SHARP Prevention Specialists at each installation, the Army is equipping itself with dedicated professionals who possess the requisite capabilities, skills, and tools necessary to combat sexual misconduct at its core.

In addition, the Army is establishing a Victim Support Specialist implementation plan. Victim Support Specialists will serve a vital role in deployed settings by facilitating 2 victim care and support. Upon returning to home station, these specialists will assist commands with prevention and training requirements under the oversight of SHARP Prevention Specialists. The rollout of these specialists is anticipated in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

The Army OSTC reached full operational capability (FOC) on December 28, 2023 and began exercising its statutory authority over all covered offenses. Special trial counsel, rather than commanders, now make independent case disposition decisions and prosecute courts-martial. Since December 28, 2023, special trial counsel have exercised authority over nearly 1700 reported offenses. By employing a justice-focused and victimcentered approach to sexual assault cases, the OSTC will improve accountability efforts, increasing trust in the military justice system.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2022 required the Department of Defense (DoD) to publish a plan to address the manner in which they will analyze effects in law and policy with respect to the disposition of offenses over which special trial counsel exercise authority.

The plan was published by the General Counsel of the DoD on December 15, 2023. It includes seven categories of systemic performance measures and data collection categories to assess the effects of the creation of the OSTC and monitor the disposition of offenses over which special trial counsel exercise authority.

The categories of performance measures and data collection established are: (1) Due Process Protections: measures intended to assess protection of the rights of the accused; (2) Victims' Experience: measures intended to assess the participation and experience of victims throughout the military justice process as well as adherence to their rights; (3) Accountability: measures intended to assess the accountability imposed on the accused with regard to substantiated allegations; (4) Timeliness and Resource Prioritization: measures intended to assess the efficiency and timeliness of case processing and the appropriate prioritization of OSTC resources; (5) Competence and Capacity: measures intended to assess the experience levels and capacity of special trial counsel; (6) Communication: measures intended to assess commu-

nication between special trial counsel; and (7) Demographics: measures intended to capture demographic factors of the accused and victim(s) at various stages of the military justice process.

Additionally, the Army will provide input to the DoD as part of the report to Congress in February 2025 assessing the holistic effect of the military justice reforms contained in the NDAA for FY 2022. The Army OSTC utilizes a three-tiered structure, with: (1) a headquarters element in the National Capitol Region, (2) eight circuits, and (3) teams of special trial counsel and support personnel located at 28 installations with world-wide coverage.

The organization includes approximately 160 personnel, including 63 certified special trial counsel. As part of the initial manning approved by the Secretary of the Army, the OSTC will grow to approximately 180 personnel in FY25. While individuals choose restricted reporting for a variety of reasons, conversion of these reports may be an indicator of trust in the response system. The Army's SHARP Program is actively engaged in initiatives aimed at facilitating the transition of restricted reports to unrestricted reports, ensuring that victims have access to the necessary support and resources they require.

By implementing stringent confidentiality measures and prioritizing victim empowerment, the SHARP Program underscores its commitment to creating a supportive environment conducive to unrestricted reporting. Victims who opt for restricted reporting are assured access to a comprehensive array of support services, 3 including behavioral health, medical assistance, legal services, and victim advocacy, as are unrestricted cases.

The Army also continues to offer adult victims making restricted reports the option to participate in the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program, where they can anonymously submit suspect information to help identify serial offenders. Through continuous monitoring of conversion trends and initiatives like CATCH, the Army is dedicated to fostering trust in the response system, thereby encouraging victims to seek the assistance they need without barriers. [See page 18.]

Admiral CHEESEMAN. The Navy has fully implemented the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (FY22 NDAA) requirement to establish the Office of Special Trial Counsel. The office reached full operational capability in October 2023, before the mandated December 2023 date. It is led by an O-7 Lead Special Trial Counsel and is staffed by 91 personnel in 10 locations worldwide.

The Office of Special Trial Counsel is manned by independent, specialized, and expert counsel. The office is fully executing the mission of screening and prosecuting covered offense cases, including exercising discretionary reach-back authority where appropriate to make disposition decisions on cases that predate 28 December 2023, as authorized by the FY24 NDAA. The office reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy without any intervening authority and completes its duties independent from the victims' or suspects' chain of command.

Successes include the Navy-wide effort to train and educate legal professionals, Fleet leaders, and legal partners on military justice reforms. Early indications are that the Fleet has received these changes well and adapted to them. Challenges common with setting up a new organization include ensuring that optimal facilities are available to support the mission.

It is too soon for us to know what impact these changes may be having on the force writ large. Performance measures and data collection categories have been developed in accordance with Congressional direction in Sec. 547(c) of the FY22 NDAA. Military justice reform remains an ongoing and evolving effort. The Navy is continually assessing the efficacy of new policies and practices and is ready to adjust as needed. The Navy, in close partnership with the Office of Special Trial Counsel, is spearheading an initiative to develop a comprehensive, ongoing assessment framework using a wide range of qualitative and quantitative factors. These assessments include a newly developed military justice reform survey to obtain victim and other user input on their perception and confidence in the system as the significant military justice reforms are implemented.

We are continually assessing the staffing needs of the Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC). The number of new cases the Navy OSTC receives is on an upward trajectory as a result of mandatory reviews of domestic violence cases and, as of January 2025, the anticipated addition of substantiated allegations of Article 134, UCMJ sexual harassment cases. The Navy is assessing the resourcing impacts of these projected caseloads that may generate additional manpower needs.

All reporting options-Restricted Reports and Unrestricted Reports- have access to the following care and recovery services: SARC/SAPR VA advocacy services, healthcare, mental healthcare, Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE), consultation and representation through Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel/Victims' Counsel, spiritual support through Military Chaplains, and victim safety

assessments. DoD's Restricted Reporting policy permits adult victims of sexual assault to officially report incidents of sexual assault to specified individuals: (Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC), Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocate (VA), or healthcare personnel.

These personnel ensure the victim receives these services without triggering an investigation. Navy affirms victims' rights to the full range of supportive services without participating in the military justice process triggered by an Unrestricted Report. SARCs and SAPR VAs routinely provide victims with the information necessary to make informed decisions about their reporting options and recovery. A victim's decision to make a restricted report (or to convert to an unrestricted report) will depend on a number of factors, to include the victim's desired pathway for recovery. Navy's SAPR Program trains all SARCs and SAPR VAs in the provision of victimcentered, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed care that takes into account each victim's safety, needs, autonomy, and desired privacy. [See page 18.]

General GLYNN. The Marine Corps stood up the Office of Special Trial Counsel ahead of the Department's target date of 28 December 2023, is hiring a primary prevention workforce, and has implemented various other measures to prevent and address destructive behaviors. The Marine Corps is expanding the integrated prevention workforce, as well as the sexual assault prevention and response workforce, and is enhancing entry-level training to teach the continuum of harm, address healthy communication, boundaries, and relationships.

These include modernizing SAPR annual training commensurate with respective rank and leadership positions. We are also implementing "no wrong door" and "warm handoff" protocols among SAPR, Equal Opportunity, Family Advocacy Program, and other victim services. Further, the Marine Corps is taking an integrated approach as part of our strategic focus on preventing all harmful behaviors, including sexual assault and sexual harassment. These efforts align with Marine Corps Total Fitness (MCTF), which strengthens Marines and families holistically across four domains: social, spiritual, mental, and physical fitness. Strengthening Marines and enhancing resilience across all domains supports prevention of harmful behaviors.

The statutorily mandated transfer of disposition authority for covered, known, and related offenses from Commanders to an independent Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC) has occurred with the full support of Commanders and their Staff Judge Advocates, which in turn has facilitated necessary dialogue and coordination regarding the care and treatment of victims and accused. Further, continuous dialogue and communication with the Victims' Legal Counsel Organization as outlined in the OSTC's victim engagement plan ensures victims remain informed and heard. Lastly, close coordination and collaboration with other services' OSTCs has allowed for the sharing of best practices.

Early challenges encountered by the OSTC include the volume of cases requiring a disposition decision, the complex nature of covered offense cases, and the number of Military Criminal Investigators and Special Trial Counsel available. Some of the challenges are due to working with, understanding, and executing new processes and procedures, which we believe will improve over time as the OSTC construct matures.

We will continue to assess staffing levels to ensure appropriate staffing in the OSTC. The addition of sexual harassment as a covered offense next year will require additional assessment.

Regardless of their chosen reporting method, all victims are provided access to the following care and recovery services: SARC/SAPR VA advocacy services, healthcare, mental healthcare, Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE), consultation and representation through Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel/Victims' Counsel, spiritual support through Military Chaplains and victim safety assessments. Education is the key to empowering victims to make the best choice for themselves on reporting and we continually work to improve our training.

We make sure all victims know that they can change a Restricted Report to an Unrestricted Report during the process and that they know the implications of doing so. We understand that at times, restricted reporting may be the safest choice, especially amongst domestic abuse victims and intimate partner sexual assault victims, as seeking outside support may increase risk to victims from their abusers.

In these cases, victims are still afforded access to medical services, legal advice, and advocacy services. Furthermore, we participate in DoD's Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) program, which serves as an avenue for victims to anonymously submit suspect information to help military law enforcement identify serial offenders in cases with both Restricted and Unrestricted reports, or in cases where no report is submitted. Our overarching goal is to encourage all reporting. [See page 18.]

Ms. KELLEY. Consistent with the mandates of the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Department of Air Force (DAF) Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC) reached full operational capability on December 27, 2023. Focused on accountability for offender misconduct, Special Trial Counsel (STC) provide expert, specialized, independent, and ethical representation of the United States in the investigation and trial-level litigation of covered offenses. OSTC is headquartered at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C., and field operations occur from six District Offices worldwide, in order to facilitate effective communication between OSTC personnel and installation command, legal, and law enforcement teams.

OSTC reached full operational capability with 35 active component judge advocates, 5 reserve component judge advocates, and 6 enlisted paralegals. The Office will continue to grow through FY27 to an anticipated total of 67 judge advocate billets and 15 paralegal and civilian support billets. During the period of growth, OSTC operations are augmented by reserve component judge advocates who are certified STC. Although OSTC operates independently of the chain of command, it exercises its authority in a unified prosecutorial effort that includes local legal, law enforcement, and command personnel.

In conjunction with the servicing legal office, OSTC serves as the lead advisor to law enforcement on critical investigative steps and alerts command to appropriate disposition decisions. OSTC personnel collaborate with installation legal personnel, from initial report through trial-level litigation, and they ensure robust victim engagement throughout the administration of justice. To ensure effective operations, OSTC worked with the Office of the Judge Advocate General (AF/JA) to revise 14 DAF policy directives, instructions, and manuals.

Continued partnership further enabled position-tailored training on military justice reform, reaching over 2,000 command team members and 2,500 total force JA personnel at 128 DAF locations. Currently, STC are leading the investigation and prosecution of hundreds of qualifying offenses. To measure mission success and impact, OSTC is implementing the Department of Defense's "Plan for Assessing Effects of Changes in Law," as directed by FY22 NDAA Section 547(c). The plan includes seven categories of performance measures and data collection categories.

Similarly, OSTC is evaluating the optimal timelines for the investigation and prosecution of covered offenses, as outlined by the Department of Defense's Study Team Report on Recommendation 1.8 of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. It is too early to identify discernible trends in the data, but OSTC and (AF/JA) are evaluating these performance measures in advance of the February 1, 2025 congressional reporting deadline established under Section 541 of the FY23 NDAA.

The DAF, through the Independent Review Committee for Sexual Assault in the Military, has expanded the full-time Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) workforce which ensures dedicated personnel to provide top-tier advocacy, care, and support to victims. In addition to expanding the SAPR workforce, the DAF has also stood up a dedicated prevention workforce to implement prevention strategies to eradicate interpersonal violence before it starts. The US Space Force's Holistic Health Approach includes primary prevention skill-building focused on healthy relationships and interactions.

This research-informed skill-building is taught across the career cycle of a Guardian and includes relationship green flags (to signal what healthy relationships look like), healthy boundaries, conflict resolution, empathy, communication, mindfulness, and self-care. Each offering includes activities to provide learners with the opportunity to practice skills. Regardless of the reporting option chosen, victims receive full care and support for as long as needed. Victims who elect to make a restricted report may receive medical (physical and mental) care, advocacy and/or legal consultation. Victims are empowered to select their reporting method and are fully supported if they decide to switch to an unrestricted report, which will potentially initiate an investigation. [See page 18.]

General MILLER. Consistent with the mandates of the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Department of Air Force (DAF) Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC) reached full operational capability on December 27, 2023. Focused on accountability for offender misconduct, Special Trial Counsel (STC) provide expert, specialized, independent, and ethical representation of the United States in the investigation and trial-level litigation of covered offenses.

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In addition to expanding the SAPR workforce, the DAF has also stood up a dedicated prevention workforce to implement prevention strategies to eradicate interpersonal violence before it starts. The US Space Force's Holistic Health Approach includes primary prevention skill-building focused on healthy relationships and interactions. This research-informed skill-building is taught across the career cycle of a Guardian and includes relationship green flags (to signal what healthy relationships look like), healthy boundaries, conflict resolution, empathy, communication, mindfulness, and self-care.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

APRIL 17, 2024

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

Mr. WALTZ. The new GENESIS system allows health care providers to understand a patient's complete medical history with an integrated health record and delivers new capabilities. Service members consistently ranked medical care as a top cause of dissatisfaction during a series of focus groups conducted by the Office of the Naval Inspector General in 2023, according to the report. They cited their inability to access care in a timely manner for everything from routine primary care visits to mental health appointments.

As we look to improve Quality of Life and Service for our military, have the extensive electronic issues and downtime of this online GENESIS program been corrected for our servicemembers and veterans?

How are you working with DHA to address the red flags GENESIS identifies going back to a Servicemembers' childhood?

How has the Medical Assessment Record Pilot (MARP) improved medical capability in the GENESIS system?

The GENESIS system allows DoD access to all of service members medical history from birth including medical history, prescriptions, etc. into one data base.

How are you addressing HIPPA concerns from servicemembers and prospective recruits pulling healthcare and prescription information from civilian medical centers into a massive electronic data center - the largest electronic healthcare electronic repository in the U.S. - long before enlistment?

Admiral CHEESEMAN. Ensuring quality of life improvements continues to be a vital priority and the rollout of MHS GENESIS provided a significant opportunity to streamline several aspects of military requirements. As demonstrated, the program revealed unintended challenges that are currently being addressed and the Navy continues to collaborate with the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness as the program owner of MHS GENESIS.

As an accessions tool, the Navy is a key member of the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed MHS GENESIS Task Force to modernize and review how the Department of Defense (DoD) accesses new Service members. Three key ongoing initiatives include: increased and enduring medical staffing, development of machine learning capabilities, and a review of defining medical qualifications.

Relatedly, the Joint Accessions and Retention Military Service Working Group and the Medical Accession Records Pilot program are both efforts that address restrictions on certain disqualifying health conditions and are reviewing requirements with an emphasis on incorporating mental health parameters. MHS GENESIS pulls data from civilian medical systems for inclusion in a patient's medical record.

Having a full and complete picture of any patient's medical care is critical to ensuring the quality and safety of healthcare provided. Specific to recruits, it also gives Military Departments a full and comprehensive view of recruits' medical needs, to ensure the health of prospective recruits is consistent with military service.

Patient privacy and safeguarding patient data in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is foundational to the Military Health System. To safeguard data in MHS GENESIS, DoD mandates users undergo Cyber Awareness, HIPAA and Privacy Act training, and sign an acceptable use policy. Only those with an official need can access protected health information (PHI), as per standards provided by DoD policy. Additionally, Military Medical Treatment Facilities conduct system activity reviews to identify and prevent unauthorized PHI access.

Mr. WALTZ. The new GENESIS system allows health care providers to understand a patient's complete medical history with an integrated health record and delivers new capabilities. Service members consistently ranked medical care as a top cause of dissatisfaction during a series of focus groups conducted by the Office of the Naval Inspector General in 2023, according to the report. They cited their inability to access care in a timely manner for everything from routine primary care visits to mental health appointments.

As we look to improve Quality of Life and Service for our military, have the extensive electronic issues and downtime of this online GENESIS program been corrected for our servicemembers and veterans?

How are you working with DHA to address the red flags GENESIS identifies going back to a Servicemembers' childhood?

How has the Medical Assessment Record Pilot (MARF) improved medical capability in the GENESIS system?

The GENESIS system allows DoD access to all of service members medical history from birth including medical history, prescriptions, etc. into one data base.

How are you addressing HIPPA concerns from servicemembers and prospective recruits pulling healthcare and prescription information from civilian medical centers into a massive electronic data center - the largest electronic healthcare electronic repository in the U.S. - long before enlistment?

General GLYNN. The medical readiness of our Marines is a top priority, and ensuring protection of personal information is important. We look forward to the Department's assessment of the medical screening process from the Military Health System GENESIS Task Force with a focus on finding efficiencies and increasing staffing of MEPCOM's medical providers. In my role as Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs for the Marine Corps, I support USD(P&R) who has direct oversight of MHS Genesis and its associated policies and protocols.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. FINSTAD

Mr. FINSTAD. Minnesota has approximately 463 active duty Service Members and 17,375 Reserve and National Guard Service Members. This shows that many States have greater Reserve and National Guard equities than active component equities. The biggest branch in the US Military, the US Army, even has approximately 60,000 more Soldiers in the Reserve and National Guard than the active component.

What accounts for the disparity between promotion timelines and zones of consideration between active component and Reserve, and National Guard promotion boards for officers? Do the Services plan to create more parity in promotion timeline for Reserve and National Guard officers?

Constituents that also serve in the Reserve and National Guard, while holding down another job as a Citizen-Service Member, have provided notice to my office about the lack of parity in promotion timelines between themselves and their active component counterparts or peers. That is, it appears that officers in the active component get promoted to the next higher grade between 1-3 years faster or earlier than Reserve and National Guard Service Members. This lack of parity in promotion timeline does not reward or treat fairly Reserve and National Guard officers who often carry double weight by also serving their cities, towns, counties, and state. The Services should create parity between their components, such that an officer in the Reserve and National Guard can receive the same promotion opportunities in the same timeline as active component officers.

General STITT. The Reserve Components (United States Army Reserve and Army National Guard) work within statutory requirements, DoD Policy, and Army policy to provide promotion opportunities and career progression for all Soldiers. Officers are promoted through mandatory promotion boards (10 USC 14101), promotion vacancy boards for the USAR, and Federal recognition boards for the ARNG. Officers are subject to time in grade requirements which are set by statute (10 USC 14303 and 14404) and policy. Promotions may also be limited by authorized strength and positions. Officers recommended for promotion must be assigned to positions commensurate with grade in order to promote; otherwise they must transfer to the IRR to be promoted upon reaching maximum time in grade. Within these constraints, it is important to note that officer promotions are designed to promote officers with the greatest potential and are not an award solely for time in service. For all of these reasons, it would be detrimental to align Regular Army eligibility with the Reserve Components.

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Admiral CHEESEMAN. There is parity between the Navy officer promotion timelines of the Active and Reserve Components. The vast majority of Navy Reserve officer communities promote within the same DoD standard required for Active Component officers (described below). When there is variation, it is minimal (+/- 1 year), and it is attributable to breaks in service between Active and Reserve, conversion to a different officer community, or other career changes that impact time-in-grade or time-in-service.

Additionally, both the Active and Reserve Components have the same minimum time-in-grade requirements for officer promotion. Federal law establishes the requirement for each Military Department to maintain an Active Duty List (ADL) and Reserve Active Statute List (RASL). The ADL and RASL are governed by two separate pieces of law. For Active Component officers, DoD directs the promotion timing on the ADL, by grade: O-4 = 10 years +/- 1 year O-5 = 16 years +/- 1 year O-6 = 22 years +/- 1 year For Reserve Component officers, those officers on the RASL, DoD policy dictates that the Secretary of the Military Department determines the timing for promotion based on force requirements.

Title 10, U.S.C. §14303 and §14304 sets forth minimum and maximum years of service in grade for reserve component officers to be eligible for promotion to the next grade. Those reserve officers in grades of O-3, O-4, and O-5 must complete three years time-in-grade, but no more than seven years time-in-grade to be eligible to promote to the next grade. Additionally, Title 10, U.S.C. §14305 requires a relatively similar promotion opportunity over a five-year period in each grade and competitive category. Navy policy defines this as a variance of +/- 10 percent for active component officers, and the Secretary of the Navy, under the authority of DoD policy, has established the same percentage for reserve component officers.

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General GLYNN. We are committed to ensuring that all qualified officers, regardless of component, have equal opportunities for advancement in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps Reserve places great emphasis on maintaining the authorized strength of the Reserve Component, ensuring a capable and ready reserve force to augment, reinforce, and sustain the Active Component. This focus inherently shapes promotion timelines and zones of consideration.

Overall, the promotion flow points for Marine Corps Reserve officers may deviate somewhat from those of the Active Component, but typically by less than a year. The difference in timing is largely attributed to the transition timeline of Active Component officers into the reserves. Transitioning officers who actively engage and maintain an adequate level of participation once in the Reserves promote equitably with their activeduty peers. In some cases, these Marines transition to the Indi-

vidual Ready Reserve following End of Active Service and have limited to no participation in the Reserves as they establish civilian employment.

This transition period often limits their reserve participation, thereby delaying their eligibility or consideration for selection by promotion boards. We continuously assess and refine our promotion processes to ensure fairness and consistency across all components of the Marine Corps.

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General MILLER. Air Force Reserves: Regardless of component, Regular AF (active-duty component) (RegAF) and Air Force Reserve (AFR) promotion timelines are driven by the needs of the US Air Force determined by the number of officers required in each grade, along with the average length of service of members within the grade and projected vacancies.

The disparity between RegAF and AFR officer promotion is primarily due the size and makeup of the AFR officer reserve corps compared to the RegAF. The AFR is a smaller component compared to the RegAF; therefore, it requires less officers. Equally as impactful is the AFR's primary sustainment strategy based on capturing talent leaving the Regular Component.

This results in officers joining the AFR with various years of service as well as time-in-grade compared to the RegAF. It also means that inventory levels are less stable, fluctuating year to year, making it challenging to accurately project long-term need.

Additionally, AFR officers tend to serve longer than their Regular Component counterparts. For example, most AFR lieutenant Colonels retire with 28 years of service compared to 22 years for RegAF officers. When you need less officers; the ones you have generally join with longer time-in-service/grade; and the ones you have serve longer, it limits the number of available vacancies to promote officers into resulting in longer promotion timelines.

To create parity among the components would result in officers being promoted into grades without positions for them to fill. Air National Guard: The promotion process for National Guard (ANG) officers differs from the Reserve and Active-Duty Components and is based on meeting time-in-grade (TIG) requirements and they can be promoted through either the Mandatory Promotion process or Position Vacancy (PV) process. If an officer is not chosen to promote through the PV process, they will meet the board in the Mandatory Promotion process - both processes and timelines outlined below.

Ultimately, the commander plays a crucial role in promoting officers based on their qualifications and the needs of the unit, ensuring that deserving officers advance in their careers. The ANG officer promotion process typically takes between 6 -12 months which is time needed to conduct a board and comply the requirements in the Reserve Officer Promotion Act (ROPMA). Timelines should be comparable with the Defense Officer Promotion Act (DOPMA). ANG Mandatory Officer Promotions: The mandatory promotion process for ANG Officers to the grades of first lieutenant and captain occur two times per calendar year.

Eligibility for the Federal promotion selection lists is determined by the officer's time-in-grade. For promotion to first lieutenant and captain, the time in grade requirement is 2 years. For promotion to major and lieutenant colonel, the time in grade requirement is 7 years.

Mandatory promotions to the grades of major and lieutenant colonel are required to meet the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) selection board

annually held at Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC), Buckley Air Force Base. The process estimated from start (eligibility) to finish (Senate confirmation) is 345 days. ANG Officer PV Promotions:

This process allows for timely promotions based on eligibility and available positions. Position vacancies are nominative promotions and contingent on position vacancy and minimum TIG. Major & Lieutenant Colonel requires four years TIG, and Colonel requires three years TIG. The ANG holds six PV boards throughout the year and two Colonel promotion boards per year in the spring and fall.

PV promotions to the grades of major through colonel are selected for promotion through their State Federal Recognition Examination Board (FREB) and then required to meet a Federal Recognition Review Board (FRRB) held at Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC), Buckley Air Force Base to extend federal recognition. The process from start (eligibility) to finish (Senate confirmation) is on average 6 to 8 months.

