

STATEMENT BY

MG THOMAS P. BOSTICK

COMMANDER, UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND

UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE

MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

UNITED STATES SENATE

SECOND SESSION, 110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

JANUARY 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2008

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNTIL RELEASED BY THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Nelson, Senator Graham and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Army's recruiting force. I also want to thank you for supporting our initiatives to improve incentives and bonus programs to attract the very best Soldiers. I take tremendous pride in saying that today's All-Volunteer Force is actually an "all-recruited" force and they are proudly representing our Nation throughout the Army.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, the Army did not achieve its Regular Army recruiting mission by accessing 73,000 of its required 80,000 mission. Additionally, the Army achieved 19,400 of the required 22,175 Reserve mission. The Army Recruiting Command was then reinforced with additional manpower, resources and incentives, and as a result, enlisted 13,000 more Soldiers for the Regular Army and Army Reserve in FY06 than in FY05 to achieve the 80,000 Regular Army mission and 99% of the 25,500 Army Reserve Mission. We built upon this success in FY07 to achieve both the 80,000 Regular Army and 26,500 Army Reserve missions recruiting an additional ~107,000 Soldiers for our Army. The Regular Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard combined to enlist 170,000 Soldiers into our Army during a period of persistent combat. We knew what we needed to do, and clearly made the right adjustments at the time. However, adequate resources are not always enough to ensure success.

FY08 will be another challenging recruiting year. We have the support of the total Army as we work to achieve the FY08 mission of 80,000 accessions for the Regular Army and 26,500 accessions for the Army Reserve. These accession missions support reaching established Army end-strength goals. We are on glide to achieve our 80,000 accession mission for the Regular Army; however, we are slightly behind established monthly objectives for the Army Reserve. We are aggressively working

with the Army leadership to develop the way ahead to achieve our Army Reserve mission for this year.

We have a committed recruiting force and the necessary tools to achieve our recruiting missions this year. We need your continued support to help the Army mobilize the Nation behind this effort.

### ***Recruiting Environment***

For the first time since the implementation of the All-Volunteer Force, we are recruiting during a period of protracted combat. Today's recruiting environment is incredibly challenging. Less than 3 out of 10 of our Nation's youth are fully qualified for service in the Army due to disqualifying medical conditions, criminal records, lack of education credentials or low aptitude test scores. The Army competes head on with industry, the economy, and with higher education for the same high-quality youth. Today, parents and influencers are less likely to encourage their family members and other young adults to join the military. Propensity, the desire to enlist in the Armed Forces, is at its lowest point in two decades.

Despite the challenges in the current environment, 170,000 Americans stepped forward to enlist in the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard last year. In my conversations with commanders throughout the Army, it is clear that our Soldiers are proudly serving with distinction. They are also re-enlisting in large numbers, particularly those in combat. No amount of money would be enough to convince them to continue to serve, if they did not believe in what they were doing. We have the best trained, best equipped, and best led Army in the world. Our volunteer Soldiers are re-enlisting because they believe in their Nation, they believe in their flag, and they believe in each other. Each of these

Soldiers became heroes for this Nation the day they decided to enlist in our Army.

Recent Congressional incentives for recruiting such as the \$2,000 referral bonus program and increased enlistment bonus caps have provided the Army the necessary tools to attract the men and women who want to serve our great Nation during these challenging times. There are many good news stories that do not make it to the evening news, so we rely heavily on important public influencers, including strong support from members of Congress, to help us tell the Army Story. I am confident that, with your continued support, we will continue to meet the needs of our All-Volunteer Army.

### ***Funding***

The Administration, Congress and the Department of Defense with the Army and its senior leadership have provided Recruiting Command the support we have asked for to accomplish our mission. FY08 funding levels allow the Command to satisfy all recruiter support requirements. When additional resource requirements are identified and made known to the Senior Army leadership, they have taken immediate action to meet those requirements. The challenge is often one of timing. As the environment changes, we must be able to adapt quickly. Train-up of new recruiters and the development of new advertising, for example, require long lead times. We must continue to improve our understanding of the market and the recruiting environment, and implement those actions necessary to mitigate risks to the mission.

### ***Transformation***

We are constantly innovating and improving our recruiting programs to address changes in our market. Ongoing transformation efforts within US

Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) span across four major areas: policy and process, personnel selection and training, quality of life initiatives and force structure. USAREC is in the final stages of an extensive force structure transformation as a result of significant changes in market trends and population demographics. As part of this transformation, USAREC realigned and/or restructured its forty-one enlisted recruiting battalions and their respective boundaries.

The purpose of this realignment was to make the battalion spans of control more consistent across the command. This corrected existing imbalances in mission responsibilities by reducing the size of some large battalions and added responsibility to some smaller battalions. As a result of this realignment, four battalion headquarters were recommended for inactivation to the Department of the Army. Three of the inactivation recommendations were approved, with the final decision pending.

In addition to boundary realignments, we formed a Special Missions Brigade to handle the administration, logistics and special missions for all subordinate brigades, so that the rest of the command could focus on training, leading, and mission accomplishment. We formed a Medical Recruiting Brigade to provide the necessary command and control, and focus necessary for our five medical recruiting battalions.

At the conclusion of these transformation initiatives, USAREC will have five enlisted recruiting brigades consisting of 38 recruiting battalions, a Special Missions Brigade, and a Medical Recruiting Brigade. We believe this force structure gives us the best opportunity to achieve our assigned missions in this challenging recruiting environment.

## **Quality**

All Soldiers serving in our Army are qualified to serve. We strive to achieve the goals of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army, which are 90 percent High School Diploma Graduates (HSDG), 60 percent test score category I-III A, and with no more than 4 percent test scoring category IV. The Army does not accept applicants scoring in the lowest category on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), test score category V. In FY07, the Regular Army met Department of Defense goals for category I-III A and Category IV, but fell short in the area of HSDG, achieving 79 percent. The Army Reserve met Department of Defense goals for Category IV but fell short in the areas of HSDG and category I-III A achieving 86 percent and 57 percent respectively.

Field commanders are very pleased with the men and women now serving in their formations, some of whom are not high school diploma graduates or may have received a waiver to serve in our Army. While the Department of Defense goal for High School Diploma Graduates is 90 percent, the national average for high school graduation is 70 to 80 percent. In some urban areas of the country, the graduation rate is less than 50 percent.

The Secretary of Education has called the graduation rates in this country a "Silent Epidemic." High school graduation rates are of significant concern to the Army. Additionally, there are those who want to serve in our formations, who have graduated from High School but cannot pass the ASVAB. The Army has established education programs such as March2Success and our GED Education Plus Program to provide an academic second chance for the youth of America to give them an opportunity to serve in our Army.

Another significant issue that is affecting recruiting is the emerging obesity epidemic in the country. More and more of our youth are not exercising and have poor eating habits. We have developed a program called the Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength (ARMS) test which will allow those who pass and are a few percentage points over Army accessions body-fat standards to serve. They have up to one year to lose the weight from the time they ship to Basic Combat Training. We began this program across the country in April of 2006 and initial results indicate these Soldiers are performing well and in a similar manner as those not participating in the program.

All of the Soldiers that we recruit are qualified to serve in our Army. I have witnessed their outstanding performance first-hand during my own deployment to Iraq, and commanders in the field are extremely proud of their Soldiers.

### ***Waivers***

We have a very solid process for reviewing and approving all waivers. We place special emphasis in carefully screening those applicants who have been charged with a felony. Conduct waivers for applicants with felony charges are approved at the General Officer level. These requests are reviewed by 10 different decision makers to determine whether or not it is in the best interests of our Army to allow the applicant the opportunity to serve.

We are not recruiting hardened criminals. Those with felony convictions made the kind of mistake that a General Officer has determined does not indicate deep rooted discipline or values issues and the person has demonstrated that they have overcome their prior mistakes.

We are seeing an overall increase in waivers. We believe this increase is partly a result of changes in society, changes in policy and our improved processing procedures. In the past few years, we streamlined the waiver process from weeks to days, providing recruiters with less reason to turn away applicants who need waivers and resulting in more applicants staying with the Army enlistment process.

We conduct a very thorough examination of the facts, circumstances and the legal disposition of the charges prior to allowing individuals to enlist in our Army with a conduct waiver. These men and women are raising their hand, asking for a chance to serve their Country. They are asking to not only be a productive member of society, but are willing to defend the Constitution of the United States on behalf of their fellow citizens. They enter our Army, grow and mature as a result of Army training, teamwork, exposure to Army Values and to the Warrior Ethos. I am confident that our process is sound and in the best interest of the applicant, the Army and our Nation.

In our continuing efforts to define what constitutes a “quality” Soldier, the Army is evaluating whether Soldiers enlisting with waivers perform on par with non-waivered recruits over time. We expect preliminary results of this research effort in September of 2008.

### ***Recruiter Misconduct and Impropriety***

Recruiters are the Army’s ambassadors across the Nation and hold a position of trust with the young people and influencers in our communities. There is a small percentage of the force that violates that trust. As a result, we take very seriously allegations of recruiting misconduct and impropriety. We investigate every allegation and take appropriate action,

as necessary. In FY07, 185 of our 8,200 recruiter force had substantiated allegations.

We have a multi-pronged approach for preventing recruiter misconduct: starting with the recruiter selection process, a prescriptive training program, routine standard inspections and enforcement down to recruiter level, and reinforcement of discipline through command information and command presence on a weekly basis. We have instituted a “buddy system,” where a recruiter must be accompanied by another recruiter when in the company of an applicant of the opposite gender. Our leadership is required to conduct proactive and regular discussions of Army Values and what they mean in a recruiting environment. We also schedule an annual Army Values/Safety Stand-down Day with all command personnel, to reinforce what it means to be an American Soldier.

Each year, our recruiters have millions of contacts with the American public. Our ability to recruit successfully depends upon the public’s confidence in our commitment to recruiting with integrity.

### ***Medical Recruiting***

A very important part of our mission is to recruit medical professionals for our Army. In 1995, the United States Army Recruiting Command began recruiting all medical professionals. Today, our medical recruiting force is made up of enlisted professional recruiters, enlisted medical Soldiers, and officers from the Medical Service Corps, Nurse Corps, and Specialist Corps. We also engage both Regular Army and Army Reserve health care professionals to assist in our recruitment efforts.

We have made dramatic changes in how we execute our Medical Recruiting mission over the past several years. On October 2, 2007 we activated a Medical Recruiting Brigade Headquarters to provide command and control over our 5 Medical Recruiting Battalions. This effort will ensure we have the right levels of emphasis and expertise working this critically important mission. Initial results of this transformation have been positive. We are ahead 122 accessions compared to our performance over the same time period last year. This remains one of our most challenging areas, but we are making significant progress.

We continue to work with the Department of the Army Office of the Surgeon General to ensure the Army offers competitive benefits to encourage today's medical professionals to explore the challenges and rewards of Army service. We appreciate your continued support of our medical recruiting programs.

### ***Recruiter Access to Schools***

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provided Armed Forces recruiters access to student recruiting information and the same access to students enjoyed by colleges and prospective employers. Under current legislation, however, the military can be singled out when students or parents "Opt-Out" from having their contact information released to the military. In the same schools, there is no opt-out option against postsecondary schools or prospective employers receiving contact information. In addition, there is no established timeframe for a school to provide the student information upon request by the military recruiting services. We have instances where schools have promised repeatedly to provide the list, but ultimately give it to our recruiters too late in the year to be of much use.

We desire the opportunity to tell the Army story to young adults and let them decide for themselves whether or not service in our Army is the right

choice to help them reach their full potential. Access to our Nation's schools and student information is critical to this effort. We need your help to ensure all our Nation's youth have the opportunity to hear what the Army has to offer.

### ***Conclusion***

I am confident that our recruiters will maximize the resources you have given them in order to achieve our mission. While public support for our Soldiers remains Strong, we need more Americans to step forward and serve our Nation, a nation at War. I thank you for your commitment to assist Army recruiting, and ask for your continued support to encourage Americans to answer our Nation's call to duty.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions.