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SENATE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
REAR ADMIRAL JOSEPH F. KILKENNY, U. S. NAVY
COMMANDER NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
MILITARY RECRUITING
31 JANUARY 2008**

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United States Navy Biography

Rear Admiral Joseph F. Kilkenny Commander, Navy Recruiting Command



Rear Admiral Joseph F. Kilkenny was raised in Philadelphia, Pa. A 1977 graduate of The Citadel, he received his commission through the Navy ROTC Program and was designated a naval flight officer in December 1978.

Rear Adm. Kilkenny began his career flying the A-6 "Intruder" and later flew the EA-6B "Prowler" and F-14 "Tomcat." At sea he served in squadrons, ship's company and afloat staff assignments with Attack Squadrons, Carriers, Carrier Air Wings and Carrier Battle Groups for twenty-four years and eight deployments to the Mediterranean and Red Seas, Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as the Persian Gulf embarked in *USS Independence*, *USS Coral Sea*, *USS John F. Kennedy*, *USS Carl Vinson*, and *USS Harry S Truman*, participating in *Operations Desert Storm* and *Iraqi Freedom*. He commanded Attack Squadron One Nine Six embarked in *USS Carl Vinson*; he later commanded Carrier Air Wing Three embarked in *USS Harry S*

Truman for her maiden deployment in 2001. He has logged more than 800 carrier-arrested landings and 3500 flight hours in tactical jets.

Shore duties included assignment as an Aviation Officer Candidate Class Officer at Naval Aviation Schools Command, a Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS) instructor with Attack Squadron Forty Two, Readiness Officer at Medium Attack Wing One, Deputy Operations Officer at U.S. Atlantic Command, Head of the Strike Warfare directorate at Tactical Training Group Atlantic and Head of Aviation Officer Distribution (PERS43) at the Bureau of Personnel.

His flag officer assignments include Director, Aviation Plans and Requirements (N780) on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations and Special Assistant for Naval Aviation's Human Capital Strategy on the staff of Commander Naval Air Forces. In April 2005 he assumed Command of Carrier Strike Group Ten onboard *USS Harry S Truman*. In September 2005 he was the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander for Joint Task Force Katrina and Rita in the Gulf of Mexico.

Rear Admiral Kilkenny assumed his current position as Commander, Navy Recruiting Command in June 2006.

Rear Admiral Kilkenny's awards include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal and various campaign, service and unit awards.

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear today to offer an update on the state of Navy recruiting, both active and reserve. It is an honor for me to lead the 7,500 Total Force Sailors who are dedicated to the Navy's recruiting efforts to enlist the best and brightest young men and women to succeed in today's Navy. I am pleased to tell you that we are meeting our mission requirements in both quality and quantity and we intend to continue to do so.

Recruiting for the military is a significant challenge. The Navy is competing with private sector employers and colleges for the best and brightest from our Millennial Generation, a generation whose outlook has been fashioned by dramatically different technology and experiences than that of previous generations. During childhood, this generation witnessed acts of terrorism on American soil. Traumatizing events, such as school shootings, combined with the persistent threat of terrorism, have stimulated parents' natural instincts to be increasingly protective of and more involved in their children's lives and decision making. With the advent of the Internet, e-mail, cell phones, instant messaging and even more recent developments like interactive social-networking websites, such as *Facebook* and *MySpace*, Millennials experience the world on a global scale, 24/7. They share their experiences with, and seek information from others whom they have never met except through virtual social networks. Their pressure to succeed is internally focused and they are motivated to take jobs that help people in need and make a difference to society at large. These young men and women view education and a civilian job as the way to get ahead. Military service is typically not on their radar screens. Most Millennials' influencers have never served in the military and are generally not informed about the features and many benefits of a military career. In many cases, influencers today often

paint a neutral or sometimes negative picture of military service adding to the challenges of recruiting this generation of young Americans. To attract Millennials to join the Navy, it is vital that we relate to them on their terms and appeal to their search for something more, their sense of service, their spirit of volunteerism and their interest in the world around them.

Enlisted Recruiting

Despite the many challenges, fiscal year 2007 marked the ninth consecutive year we achieved overall Active Component accession mission, while surpassing DOD minimum recruit quality standards. In fiscal year 2007, Navy met 101 percent of active enlisted accession goal, with 93 percent High School Diploma Graduates (HSDG) and 73 percent in Test Score Categories (TSC) I-III A on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. So far in fiscal year 2008, we have sustained this success, achieving 112 percent attainment of first quarter accession goal with 92 percent HSDG and 75 percent TSC I-III A.

Last year, our number one recruiting priority was Naval Special Warfare and Special Operations (NSW/NSO). These elite programs provide some of the most demanding training in the world and require exceptionally bright and physically fit individuals. The health of these communities is very important to Navy's contributions to our Nation's successes in the Global War on Terrorism and demands that we place special emphasis on recruiting well-qualified applicants with the aptitude and capacity to successfully complete the extremely arduous training. To enhance the likelihood of candidates succeeding, we hired former NSW/NSO personnel to assist in selection, testing, education and mentoring new recruits. Since the first

hurdle for these recruits is passing the Physical Screening Test (PST), we require NSW/NSO recruits to successfully complete the PST with a passing score prior to accession. These measures dramatically increased PST pass-rates for recruits at boot camp, increasing from the historic norm of 28 percent to 78 percent in 2007. The impact of the \$40,000 enlistment bonus cannot be overstated in its contribution to our success in NSW/NSO recruiting. We would like to thank you for your past and continued support in improving the incentive packages available to the Navy.

In fiscal year 2007, the Navy achieved 100 percent of the Reserve Component accession goal compared to 87 percent the previous year. Much of the shortfall for fiscal year 2006 was in those ratings which directly support the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The traditional reliance on prior service Sailors to meet this mission made it difficult to meet the requirements. A mismatch exists between the skill sets and number of personnel transitioning from the active component to meet reserve component requirements. To address this challenge, Navy aligned the mission mix to accept recruits without prior military service through the New Accession Training (NAT) program exclusively into GWOT ratings. Additionally, Navy has streamlined the procedures to transition Sailors from Active Component to Reserve Component. We also implemented an aggressive program that allows transitioning Sailors to receive up to a \$20,000 bonus upon completion of apprenticeship training necessary to convert to GWOT ratings. The enlistment incentives you authorized for our Reserve Component have been and continue to be critical to mission attainment.

Our success with the Reserve enlisted mission continues this fiscal year. For the first quarter, we attained 115 percent of overall accession goal, while exceeding both prior-service (122 percent) and NAT (103 percent) goals.

Officer Recruiting

Fiscal year 2007 produced mixed results in the area of officer recruiting. We met 19 of 23 Active Component officer community goals, including all unrestricted line, restricted line, and staff corps community goals. Chaplain Corps, Chaplain Student Program, Naval Reactors Engineers, and Medical Professions Student Programs were the only officer communities that did not achieve annual goal. We increased our attention to officer recruiting across the board and initiated several programs and incentives to attract applicants in this competitive market.

We established Medical Officer Recruiting as our number one priority for fiscal year 2008 and are executing a comprehensive Medical Recruiting Strategy that we developed last fall to attack shortfalls in our medical programs. To attract quality medical and dental professionals, a significant amount of work has been completed to include incentives in legislation. Many of those incentives were authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (NDAA 2007), while others are in planned authorizations for 2008 legislation and beyond.

Your continued support in funding incentives that keep us competitive with the civilian marketplace will move us toward sustained success in the recruitment of medical professionals. The competitive nursing market is a good example of the effectiveness of comprehensive

financial incentives for recruiting Health Professionals. The four-year active accession bonus was increased from \$15,000 in 2005 to \$20,000 in 2006 to \$25,000 in 2007. Correspondingly, our AC Nurse Corps direct accession goal attainment improved from 55 percent to 82 percent to 103 percent in those same years.

To overcome the national nursing shortage and increasing civilian sector competition, we increased the nurse accession bonus to \$30,000 which will help sustain our success. So far in 2008 we are 30 percent ahead of last year's very successful recruiting season. Initial indications are that we should see similar results from the authorities granted in NDAA 2007 to pay up to a \$400,000 accession bonus for direct accessions of Medical Doctors and Dentists, as well as a \$20,000 accession bonus for our Medical Student programs. To date we have identified 35 percent of our accession goal, compared to 21 percent at this same time last year - a direct result of accession incentives. We are seeing similar improvement across the board and are on pace to make all active officer accession goals in fiscal year 2008.

For Reserve officers, we achieved 52 percent of our overall accession mission in 2007. Seventy-one percent of our accession requirement is from communities that require prior-service experience. That market continues to pose significant challenges since most people leaving the active Navy are leaving for reasons that are not relieved by simply switching components. Recruiters are facing the same arguments active duty commanders face when trying to retain personnel. In fiscal year 2008, we reduced our prior-service Navy requirement to 51 percent of the accession plan, though designators that demand prior Navy experience will continue to be challenging. Several initiatives have been put in place to attract prior service Sailors to the

Reserve Component including a \$10,000 affiliation bonus and a two-year mobilization deferment. Your continued support of legislation that provides us with the appropriate reserve affiliation incentives is bearing fruit. Already in 2008 we've seen a tremendous turnaround in Reserve officer recruiting. We have attained 36 percent of non-medical reserve officer goal so far in fiscal year 2008 compared to only attaining 51 percent for the entire fiscal year 2007. Reserve Medical Recruiting is our greatest success in fiscal year 2008 to date, having already attained or selected 53 percent of annual goal compared to the 57 percent we accessed in all of 2007. We attribute this success to the affiliation incentives, restructuring of our accession requirements and a renewed focus on the officer recruiting mission.

Overall, we are cautiously optimistic that with your continued support and the dedicated efforts that we have made in Officer Recruiting, we will move towards sustainable success.

Conclusion

In spite of an extremely challenging recruiting environment, Navy recruiting is well-positioned to succeed in the upcoming year. We have a sustainable, agile and adaptive recruiting force dedicated to recruiting the very best talent our nation has to offer. We ask for your continued support for the many recruiting incentives necessary to meet mission requirements for our Navy, today, tomorrow and far into the future.