

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**UNITED STATES ARMY**

**BEFORE THE**

**PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE**

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairman Graham, Senator Gillibrand, Distinguished Members of this Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the United States Army.

The Army is people and our Soldiers, Civilians, Retirees, Veterans, and Families are our greatest asset. We are the most formidable ground combat force on earth, and our missions today include fighting terrorists around the world; training Afghan and Iraqi Army forces; peacekeeping in the Sinai Peninsula and Kosovo; missile defense in the Persian Gulf; security assistance in Africa and South America; deterrence in Europe, the Republic of Korea, and Kuwait; rapid deployment global contingency forces; and response forces for the homeland. The Army currently has approximately 190K Soldiers in support of U.S. Geographic Combatant Command missions and deployed to 140 countries.

Readiness is our number one priority and manning the Army is one of the key components of readiness. As the Army draws down from the FY10 wartime high of 1.133M to 980K by FY18, we will have the smallest Active Component Army end strength since before WWII. Our Total Army end strength currently stands at approximately 1.03M with the Active Component (AC) currently at approximately 483K, the Army Reserve (USAR) at approximately 200K, and the Army National Guard (ARNG) at approximately 348K. We forecast our Total Army end strength to be approximately 990K by the end of FY17 with 460K AC, 195K USAR and 335K ARNG. With an active force this size, we must sustain the highest quality force possible.

Achieving an AC 450K end strength by FY18 requires a 40K reduction, of which approximately 14K will be involuntary. The Army has already involuntarily separated of approximately 4.4K Soldiers (1.1K enlisted and 3.3K officer) from active duty since the start of the drawdown. This drawdown is performance based, and we have strived to conduct separations with the utmost compassion and care, and remain committed to giving Soldiers the benefits they've earned and the dignity and respect they deserve. The separating Soldier's chain of command is actively involved in the transition process and Transition Assistance Programs are available to ensure a smooth takeoff.

A primary difference between this drawdown and the drawdown after the first Gulf War is our use of involuntary separation boards. Our involuntary reduction programs focus on quantity by grade and skill and on quality by assessing a Soldier's potential for future service. We only use involuntary separations when necessary because we recognize there are qualified and committed Soldiers who will be asked to separate from active duty. We are encouraging qualified Soldiers who must transition from active duty to continue to use their skills in the USAR or the ARNG.

Simultaneous to the drawdown and to shape the future force, we still need to recruit resilient and fit Soldiers of character who can become competent, committed, agile and adaptable leaders in the Profession of Arms. This effort starts with comprehensive, focused national and local marketing strategies. Marketing efforts this year alone have resulted in increases in the number of prospects who are willing to consider Army service. Despite a challenging recruiting environment, where fewer than one in three

U.S. youths are qualified to serve and only one in eight have a propensity to enlist, the Army achieved its FY15 AC recruiting mission of 59K with more than 95% of enlistees holding high school diplomas. The ARNG successfully recruited to meet end strength and the USAR was in striking distance of its FY15 recruiting mission. We are aggressively working to achieve FY16 active and reserve component recruiting goals, and we are focused on bringing in high quality recruits to reduce first-term attrition.

The Army must continue to retain the most talented Soldiers and non-commissioned officers with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs. Even with current challenges, persistent conflict, continued drawdowns and budgetary uncertainty, the AC, USAR and ARNG each achieved their FY15 retention missions and are on track to successfully meet their respective FY16 retention missions.

Commensurate with the military drawdown, we have drawn down our Civilian Workforce from a wartime high in FY11 of 284K (238K Army appropriations) to 247K (206K Army appropriations) in FY15, with a projected workforce of 240K (196K Army appropriations) by FY17. As the Army evolves, and the Civilian Workforce is reduced, we are continuing to make improvements in how we recruit, manage, develop and evaluate our Civilians. Ongoing initiatives are designed to institutionalize career programs, leadership training, individual development and senior leader talent management, which ensures civilian leaders are developed on par with their military counterparts.

The Army Civilian Training and Education Development System Intern Program provides for a strategic succession plan to replenish the Civilian workforce while

maintaining the requisite skills required for functional proficiency. Program re-engineering efforts have resulted in improved hiring execution, with program goals to hire 1,000 interns annually. Fifty percent of the intern hires are within science, technology, engineering and mathematic fields, and about half of our intern hires are veterans.

Diversity is important to the Army. Through our outreach and marketing efforts, we are focused on increasing diversity of the force in underrepresented branches and occupations. We've seen improvements in representing the diversity of America's talent in our officer corps. The United States Military Academy (USMA) increased the number of female cadets from 16% in the class of 2016 to 22% in the class of 2019. The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) experienced similar growth in female enrollments from 21% in 2016 to more than 27% women in class of 2019. Further, the officer corps has had an increase in African American Accessions - 15% in USMA class of 2019 are African American versus 8% of the class of 2016, and 13% will commission through ROTC in 2019, versus an average of 11% from 2012-2016. Through marketing and targeted recruiting and retention efforts, we remain committed to sustaining a high-quality All-Volunteer Force of the future that represents the diversity of America.

The Army is committed to giving all Soldiers who can meet the standards of a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) the opportunity to serve in that MOS. From May 2012 to October 2015, we opened more than 95K positions to women. Pending approval of our implementation plan, we will open approximately 125K additional positions to women in

Infantry, Armor and Field Artillery as well as approximately 13K positions in Special Forces. Opening all military occupations provides increased opportunities for women and more talent for the Army.

To build a Total Army of active, reserve and National Guard forces, as well as Civilians, who are trained and ready to take on the challenges of the future, we must leverage and manage all available talent and ensure every individual is able to get on the field and play his or her position. Our goal, is complete visibility of all of our knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors to ensure the right person is in the right job at the right time. To accomplish this, we must move from a personnel management system to a talent management system. We are actively pursuing the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A). IPPS-A is a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) that for the first time, will allow the Army to manage the AC, USAR, and ARNG on one HRIS, providing visibility of the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors of the Total Force. Next, it will allow us to manage talents and match them to Army requirements. Finally, it will provide us an audit capability to ensure personnel and pay are compliant with the law.

The Army's prioritization on readiness and taking care of Soldiers has resulted in reducing our non-deployable Soldier population from a high of 17% Active Component Brigade Combat Team non-deployables in April 2011 to approximately 10% of the Total Army in December 2015. To ensure Soldiers get the benefits they have earned, the Army continues to reduce the time it takes for a Soldier to process through the

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). Active component averages approximately 220 days and Reserve component approximately 269 days. Similarly, we've reduced the IDES inventory from about 17K Soldiers in December 2014 to just under 13K Soldiers in December 2015. We've also reduced the Temporary Disabled Retired List from approximately 17K in December 2014 to 8,816 Soldiers in December 2015.

Personal resiliency is fundamental to readiness. At our 25 Resilience/Performance Training Centers, we've certified 35K Master Resiliency Trainers who are resident in company level formations to help train on 14 resiliency skills. Every trainee receives two hours of resiliency training in Basic Combat Training. This year, we've also piloted a teen resiliency program for seventh to twelfth-graders that develops self-awareness, self-regulation, and helps to build character and social connections. We continue to field the Commander's Risk Reduction Dashboard to help unit commanders better see the level of resiliency in their formations. We continue to use the Global Assessment Tool (GAT), a self-awareness tool for Soldiers to measure their personal resilience by assessing their own physical, psychological, social and spiritual readiness. In FY15 alone, more than 781K Soldiers completed the GAT.

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) remains a top priority for our Army. Sexual violence goes against everything we stand for as Soldiers. The "Not In My Squad" Campaign, led by the Sergeant Major of the Army, stresses the importance of trust at squad level and the basic leadership traits of competence,

character and commitment. Through this effort and continued leader emphasis, we will improve command climates to ensure every Soldier is treated with dignity and respect.

While reports of sexual harassment and assaults have increased in the past year, prevalence has decreased. Prevalence is the percentage of active duty service members who have indicated they experienced unwanted sexual contact within the past 12 months. In FY14 the Army received 2,606 reports (2,072 were reported by Soldiers). This marks a 12% increase from FY13 and is 60% higher than FY12 (1,572). Prevalence is down from 8,800 in FY12 to 7,300 in FY14. An increase in reporting reflects increased trust in the chain of command. Our Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, Program Managers and Special Victim Counsels continue to provide support to victims through more than 12 resource centers. This concerted effort and emphasis on the victim -- now fully instituted on our installations -- has allowed us to programmatically shift to prevention from reaction in the coming year. The SHARP Academy is a best practice in this prevention effort, having trained 230 personnel in FY14 and 395 in FY15.

Suicide remains a serious concern for our Army. With the number of deaths by suicide in the AC at the lowest in the last six years, and suicide rates in the USAR and ARNG, within historical norms, the Army remains committed to combating suicide with a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to suicide prevention. Key to this approach is getting the Soldiers' family, squad leader and buddies sensitized to the indicators, difficult life



transitions and high risk behaviors that could lead to a suicide, and then having the required behavioral health care at the point of need.

Key to suicide prevention is decreasing the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care. Behavioral health encounters for the Total Army grew from approximately 700K in FY03 to approximately 1.6M in FY14, indicating greater trust in the system. Active duty Soldiers using behavior health services increased from 5.7% in FY03 to 15.6% in FY14. Reserve component Soldiers using behavioral health care increased from 2.5% in FY03 to 7.2% in FY14. Family members using behavior health services likewise increased from approximately 300K in FY03 to 1.3M in FY14. In addition to reducing the stigma associated with seeking help, the Army has provided more timely care. In 2014 more than 90% of Soldiers were seen by a privileged mental health provider within thirty days – this is an increase from 25% in FY11. Embedding services with brigade combat teams is a proven best practice – one that we've recently leveraged for the Army Substance Abuse Program, by aligning services under MEDCOM.

In addition to taking care of Soldiers and their Families while they are in the Army, we are committed to helping them transition into the civilian world. We know that only 10% of enlisted Soldiers and 30% of officers stay in the service for 20 years, the point where they are eligible for retirement. It is clear that we must focus on preparing our Soldiers for life after their service. Every year about 120K Soldiers transition from the Army and we must ensure they have a smooth transition to civilian life with quality employment.

VOW Act compliance across the Army was 88% -- the Active Component at 90%, ARNG at 85% and USAR at 75%. Compliance numbers increased sharply over last year with an 18% increase across the Total Army. The compliance rate in the Active Component was up 7%; ARNG produced the largest increase of 39%; and USAR recorded a 24% improvement.

We consider all Soldiers to be “Soldiers for Life” who deserve our enduring gratitude and recognition of their service. Today’s Soldiers will not only influence the next generation of young people to join the Army but will connect communities across the Nation with its Army.

In addition to building strong relationships with government, non-government and private sector entities, we have synchronized our efforts to provide post military service career opportunities by enabling collaborative efforts with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Labor to bring Transition Summits to installations worldwide. Soldier for Life continues to leverage our interagency partners, the private sector and non-profit philanthropic organizations connecting Soldiers and their Families with opportunities across the country assisting their reintegration into civilian society.

At the end of the day, the Army is people. The men and women who serve our Nation, along with their families, are our most important asset. As a Nation, we must ensure they have the required resources so they are ready when called upon to fight and win

our Nation's wars. I thank all of you for your continued support of our All-Volunteer Army.