

RECORD VERSION

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

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

America's Army stands ready today to deploy, fight, and defeat any threat or adversary because of the courage and commitment of the Soldiers, Civilians, Veterans, and Family Members who serve our Nation. Readiness remains our number one priority. In order to sustain Army readiness, we must ensure that our people are ready, by focusing on first-class programs that provide continued care and resources for Soldiers and their Families. There is no doubt that personnel readiness is the keystone in the archway of unit and force readiness.

Today, only 29% of 17-24 year-olds in the U.S. are eligible to serve in the Army, and only one in eight has a propensity to enlist in the military, making Army accessions a challenging and resource-intensive activity. Further, America's youth are increasingly disconnected from the military and lack knowledge about military service. Individuals who are related to a service member make up most of our applicants, with 79% of new recruits having a relative who served and 28% having a parent who served.

The Army continues to focus on recruiting and accessions in order to responsibly grow end strength. We enlisted ~70,000 Active Component recruits in FY18, the largest production since 2011. Despite challenges in the recruiting environment, the Army revised its entry standards last summer in a number of areas, making clear its commitment to "Quality over Quantity". The Army is also on a path to achieve the FY19 recruiting missions in all three components. The FY19 Active Component mission is (tentatively) 68,000, USAR is 15,600 and the ARNG is 39,000. The Army is on a glide path to achieve its year-to-date Active Army and USAR recruiting missions. Recruiting is a total Army approach to include: budgeting \$450M in FY2019 for Active Army bonuses; investing \$50 million to add, relocate or improve recruiting centers in more than 200 critical markets; upgrading "goArmy.com"; achieving 100% recruiter manning by January 2019 (after adding nearly 800 recruiters in FY18); more

effectively using social media platforms; and improving advertising to include the development of a new marketing tagline. These investments provide the Army better footing to achieve the recruiting mission for all three Army components.

The Army must continue to retain the most talented Soldiers and non-commissioned officers with the experience and skills necessary to meet current and future needs. The AC, USAR and ARNG each achieved their FY18 retention missions. FY18 was a historic year for the AC, retaining over 90% of our eligible population. The previous record was 85% in FY17 and the historical average is ~81% of a specific year group. Each component is set to accomplish their respective retention missions while maintaining quality standards in FY19. These retention achievements support meeting our NCO requirements in the near to mid-term. These achievements would not be possible without the funding support for incentives granted by Congress.

Our officer corps is a strong, diverse and high-performing force. Army efforts to increase officer diversity resulted in FY18 officer accessions being 68.3% white and 31.7% minority, versus the US population of 25-34 year olds with bachelors or higher degrees being 72.9% white and 27.1% minority. FY19 Officer branching increased racial and ethnic diversity within the combat arms branches, resulting in 29.9% minority selections. In FY19, the United States Military Academy increased to 3.3% of their total population in African American cadets assigned to Infantry (IN) and Armor (AR) (32 compared to 19 in FY18) and the U.S. Army Cadet Command increased to 1.5% (48 as compared to 38 in FY18). Additionally, the percentage of Hispanic cadets branching IN and AR grew in both sources of commission to 2.2% of their total population. Female representation in combat arms also increased in FY19, as the Army is currently scheduled to access 56 women into Infantry and Armor branches in FY19, a 28.6% increase from FY18. The Army will maintain a firm emphasis to integrate diverse attributes, experiences and backgrounds into our Officer Corps to lead our All-Volunteer Soldiers

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

Any Soldier who can meet the standards of a Military Occupations Specialty (MOS) can be afforded the opportunity to serve in that MOS, regardless of gender. To date, the Army has successfully accessed and transferred more than 1,000 women into the previously closed occupations of Infantry, Armor, and Field Artillery.

Currently, 83 female officers are assigned to Infantry or Armor positions at Forts Hood, Bragg, Carson, Bliss, and Campbell. In 2019, assignments will expand to Forts Stewart, Drum, Riley, Polk, and Italy. Additionally, the Army has transferred, trained and assigned female NCOs into both Infantry and Armor specialties. As part of a multi-year effort to open other assignments to female Soldiers, as many as 500 women currently serve in every active Brigade Combat Team in the Army down to the company level. To date, 24 women have completed Ranger School and two officers are assigned to the Ranger Regiment. The Army continues its long-term studies on gender integration and continue to use a standards-based approach to increase the diversity in all our units.

The Army could simply not take on its mission of fighting and winning our nation's wars without its talented civilian workforce. Civilians serve across the institutional Army and around the globe. Civilians provide continuity and enable the Army to free up Soldiers for service in the operational Army. About 22% of the Army's total personnel are civilians. Since 2011, the Army has drawn down the civilian workforce by about 15%. As military end strength increases, the Army may need to increase the

capabilities of the Civilian Workforce to support our Soldiers and their Families. Department of the Army Civilians are key enablers of our readiness and operational capabilities. As the Army looks to become more lethal, enhance both its capability and capacity, and ensure critical support to the Soldier and their families, our Department of the Army Civilians are an integral partner, and must be right sized to ensure that part of our workforce can meet current and future demands.

In an effort to enhance our prevention efforts and gain positive, synergistic effects, we've combined the Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program Office with the Army Resiliency Directorate. This merger not only aligns the Army with the Department of Defense and sister Services, it also supports our goal of developing ready, resilient Soldiers of character who are able to fight and win our Nation's wars. Through the consolidation of the SHARP and Resiliency Directorates, we're realizing efficiencies in functionality, especially with regard to our prevention, policy, and research mission areas. Additionally, we're able to provide Command Teams with common initiatives and tools to help them realize and reinforce healthier organizational climates, which we believe is essential to the Army's first priority—Readiness.

To ensure we're organizationally ready for combat, we must sustain the individual readiness of our Soldiers. The Army is improving personnel readiness and deployability by strengthening Soldiers, improving resiliency skills, implementing the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), new deployability standards, and fostering a culture of trust. We believe these actions will enhance unit cohesion—one of the intangibles of organizational readiness.

We are continuing our efforts to provide commanders and leaders increased visibility of their readiness with improvements to the Commander's Risk Reduction Dashboard (CRRD) Increment 2. This tool gives Commanders visibility of their Soldier and unit risk history, trends, and factors impacting Personal Readiness. The Army is working to field CRRD Increment 2 to the Total Army starting this year.

In the past year, we successfully fielded Engage, which provides Soldiers with skills to recognize and enable bystander intervention and improve unit cohesion across formations. Research indicates that Soldiers lack the expertise to successfully and routinely execute professional interventions. Engage encourages engagements across a wide variety of situations to enhance communication with peers, subordinates and supervisors.

The “Not in My Squad” initiative, developed by the Sergeant Major of the Army, continues to empower squad leaders to establish healthy unit climates and encourage bystander intervention. Research has determined that squad leaders have the greatest impact on units, the individual Soldier and the organizational climate.

Engage and “Not in My Squad” are now used at 27 Ready and Resilient Performance Centers across all components of the Army. We have Certified Master Resiliency Trainers who are embedded in company-level formations and train Soldiers on sixteen resilience skills that focus on sustaining personal readiness and optimizing human performance.

The U.S. Army remains fully committed to eliminating sexual assault, sexual harassment, and associated retaliatory behavior from its ranks. Reports are thoroughly investigated, and Soldiers who commit those crimes are held accountable for their actions. All victims of sexual assault are fully supported and provided recovery services and victim protection.

Prevention, while providing professional comprehensive response when these incidents do occur, remain a top priority for the Army. We continue to focus our resources to reduce sexual misconduct across all components of the Army, while encouraging those who have experienced unwanted sexual contact to come forward. In fact, we’re anticipating the third straight year of increased reporting, which reinforces our belief of increased confidence in the chain of command and our response system

We recognize that regardless of the progress that has been made, more work must be done. For example, the recent report on Service Academies Gender Relations (SAGR) survey shows an increase in prevalence since the last time the survey instrument was administered in 2016. We attribute some of the increase in estimated prevalence to better awareness of the behaviors that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment. However, our leaders at the U.S. Military Academy have been working the past 18 months on revamping the school's prevention program prior to the SAGR survey results. As a result of a bottom-up review, they've revised the Academy's curriculum to better address some of the concerns cadets expressed about the sexual assault/sexual harassment prevention program. Additionally, reporting increased at USMA for the fifth straight year. We previously made changes to facilitate the ease of reporting for cadets and are encouraged by the fact that they trust the leadership at USMA and are confident in the Academy's response system. We are looking forward to the Service Academies national discussion on this issue at Annapolis in early April.

First-line leaders are foundational to the Army's primary prevention efforts regarding sexual assault, sexual harassment, and associated retaliation. Army leaders must set and enforce standards, practice healthy relationships, and set the conditions to prevent sexual misconduct from occurring. We will continue to build a climate of trust that respects and protects the dignity of every team member, and ensure individuals are skilled in problem identification and effective in early and proactive interventions that reduce all types of misconduct.

Suicide remains a complex national problem that the Army works to resolve as do the rest of the Services. The Army Senior Leadership remains very concerned with the high number of deaths by suicide over the past two years and have mandated a more rigorous implementation of initiatives and command emphasis across all components of the Army. We have better awareness of the demographics for most of our deaths being males in the ranks from Private First Class through Staff Sergeant who have a combination of relationship, financial, work-related, and behavioral issues. Potential reasons for the recent Active Component increase include: recruits entering service with

low resilience to adversity coupled with poor coping and communication skills; the need for maximized leader and peer visibility of the Soldier personal issues just mentioned; and lastly, the difficulty in screening for all past behavioral health histories of potential recruits. With this increased awareness, Army Senior Leadership has mandated a more rigorous implementation of initiatives and command emphasis across all components of the Army. Army is seeing a significant increase in suicide ideations. Potential reasons for this low follow through rate are: 1) stigma reduction - Soldiers becoming increasingly comfortable seeking help; 2) Effective Behavioral Health care and follow-up; and 3) increasing bystander intervention.

In 2019, the Army will conduct a pilot at select locations intended to test the following new initiatives: Leader tools designed to improve visibility, improve Soldier communication with complex and sensitive subjects, and provide Soldiers a better self-assessment; Surging capabilities to train and educate Soldiers on resilience skills designed to improve individual coping mechanisms and make resiliency an Army core competency; and renewed partnering with external agencies such as the VA, Center for Disease Control, leading universities and research Institutions to examine and potentially implement new initiatives to help reduce suicides across the Army and entire Joint Force. If these prove beneficial we expand them to the entire force.

This Army continues to work to decrease the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care, and we are seeing some positive results. Behavioral Health encounters for the Total Army grew from approximately (900K) in FY07 to approximately (2.25M) in FY17, indicating greater trust in the system. Soldiers required (65,975) fewer inpatient bed days for all types of behavioral health conditions in 2017, as compared to 2012.

Further, the Army provided more timely care to Soldiers. For example, according to the 2017 DHA Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set, 94% of all Soldiers hospitalized for a behavioral health condition received a follow-up appointment in a clinic within seven days, which far exceeds the national average. The practice of

embedding behavioral health personnel and substance abuse disorder providers within combat units provides Soldiers with more comprehensive care.

Total Army Non-Deployable personnel reduced by ~86K or 8% from June 2016 to December 2018 (~153K or 15% to ~67K or 7%). The current 7% Non-Deployable rate is a result of aligning Army reporting with the current DoD Instruction and with command emphasis at all levels. Beyond reducing the number of Non-Deployables, the published policies (*DoDI 1332.45, Retention Determinations for Non-Deployable Service Members, and Army Directive 2018-22, Retention Policy for Non-Deployable Soldiers*) are establishing a culture change. While policy revisions have proven to aid in increasing deployability and lethality, additional Army initiatives have and continue to provide positive results. The establishment of the Commander's Portal for Medical Protection System integrated essential medical readiness information in one easy-to-use application, giving Commanders (or his/her designee) the ability to quickly review Soldiers' deployability status. In short, the Commander Portal significantly increased visibility of factors influencing Soldier medical readiness. To further increase deployability, the Army established the Holistic Health and Fitness Program (H2F), which is a paradigm shift to a proactive injury prevention strategy. This program represents a comprehensive, integrated and immersive health and fitness system of governance, personnel, equipment, facilities and leader education that maximizes readiness and deployability through the reduction of injuries, attrition and associated costs. The program fosters more resilient Soldiers who are better prepared to conduct their wartime mission. While we continue to monitor the impacts of recent policy revisions and established initiatives, we are confident we're trending in the right direction, as evidenced by the increased readiness in our Brigade Combat Teams.

The readiness of Regular Army Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) has doubled since June 2016, when only 12 of 31 or 39% of RA BCTs achieved the highest state of personnel Readiness. As of December 2018, 24 of 31 or 77% of RA BCTs continued the trend of improved overall personnel readiness. The increased personnel readiness

is attributable to the collaborative efforts of Army Senior Leader emphasis and an engaged medical community.

The Army remains committed to efficiently evaluating potentially ill and injured Soldiers in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), returning fit Soldiers to duty or assisting unfit Soldiers in transitioning to civilian life. Improving trends in case processing times demonstrate the Army's resolve. Average processing times continue to drop and are down to 198 days for Non-Active Duty Soldiers and down to 201 days and for Active Duty Soldiers. Processing times were impacted during FY18 due to Information Technology (IT) migration activities involving our separate Medical Evaluation Board and Physical Evaluation Board case processing applications merging into a single disability case processing application. Per Secretary of Defense Directive, we continue to strive towards achieving a new 180-day DES processing goal, effective 1 October 2019. As of now, the IDES non-deployable population remains steady at approximately 10,000.

The Army is undertaking a comprehensive reform of the Officer Personnel Management System to ensure we match the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of each soldier to the right position, optimizing both in order to dominate in land combat against any adversary. The Army Talent Management Task Force is leading the Army's efforts to shift from an Industrial-Age personnel distribution system to an Information-Age market-based talent management model that deliberately manages our Soldiers and Civilians based on optimized placement in positions that capitalize on their unique talents. The task force oversees initiatives to ensure the Army acquires, develops, employs, and retains Soldiers and Civilians with the diverse talents required for the current and future force.

The 2019 NDAA provided us great flexibility and we use the authorities granted in it to help determine what a future talent-based system looks like. For example, the Army direct commissioned four Captains and has plans to direct commission at least 12 more officers this fiscal year, including a Major. Implementation of merit-based promotions are scheduled to begin in July with the Army Competitive Category Major

promotion board. Under the Talent Assessment Program, the Army piloted a battery of talent assessments and plans to expand the program to all junior captains attending the captain's career courses starting this summer.

Talent assessments are not new to young officers. In fact, many of the second lieutenants entering the Army today are products of talent-based branching. The program was first piloted at West Point in 2012 and expanded to ROTC in 2016 and OCS in 2018. Cadets undergo a battery of assessments that inform their branch choice and determine if it is a good fit for both the branch and the individual. An unexpected outcome of talent-based assessments is that it changed cadets' behavior over time as cadets became more aware of their own talents and more informed about branches.

In January, the Army Talent Management Task Force held a planning conference with 183 representatives from more than 80 organizations across the Army. The outcome of that conference was a series of initiatives that the Army will use to understand, assess, experiment, and implement a new talent management system – a system that when appropriate, includes spot promotions, opting out of promotion boards, and a new alternate promotion authority. Bridging the gap between the current and future system requires a regulated marketplace, integration of holistic assessments, and flexible career paths. We are currently running multiple pilots to test and gather lessons learned. For example, Assignment Interactive Module Version 2 (AIM 2) is conducting marketplace matching between officers designated to move and available assignments. Moving to an Officer Talent Management System will require fundamental changes in Army culture – changes we're already seeing with the adoption of the AIM 2 marketplace and talent-based branching. The Army is transforming its business practices and developing innovations to ensure we provide a force that is optimized to fight and win our Nation's wars.

The Army has seen an increase in officer retention in FY18, retaining 89.0% of the Army Competitive Category Captains and 94.4% of Majors compared to 87.7% and 92.8%, respectively, in FY17. Overall, the Army retained 91.7% of all officers in FY18

Since 2016, there has been nearly a 2% officer retention increase. Approximately 76% of officers are staying at least one year past their Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO) [USMA 68% / Scholarship ROTC 75%-Largest category / Non-Scholarship ROTC 85% / OCS 76%]

Over the next several years, the Army's continued use of market-based, talent based branching-integrated with initiatives to redesign promotion selection processes-will help us retain talented officers. We will recognize high performing officers and be able to manage them accordingly with the authority to make order of merit promotion list adjustments. Additionally, the use of Opt-Out provisions will offer flexibility for promotion consideration. Our analysis of the broad alternate promotion authority will allow us to develop additional initiatives; and together, the use of the new authorities granted in the FY19 NDAA will help the Army transform its business practices and develop personnel management innovations that ensure we provide a force optimized to fight and win our Nation's wars.

Taking care of Soldiers and their Families while they are in the Army is just one part of our commitment to ensuring their successful transition. We never forget we must continue our efforts to prepare our Soldiers for transition in the community as productive Veterans.

The Army's Soldier for Life program conducts strategic outreach and shapes education, employment, and health policies, programs and services to inspire citizens to serve and to create an environment where Soldiers transition to be productive members of society. The program connects private and public organizations to transitioning Soldiers and spouses looking for educational and employment opportunities.

For FY18, the Army's Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act compliance increased from 88% to over 90% -- the Active Component at 91% (+1%), ARNG at 91% (+5%), and USAR at 82% (+3%). We continue to enhance our policies and procedures for transitioning Soldiers and have ensured Commanders understand that they must

ensure their Soldiers attend VOW Act-mandated briefings. It is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure Soldiers transition successfully back into our communities. Further, according to data from the Department of Labor, in 2018 Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program efforts assisted in reducing the unemployment rate for Veterans that joined the Army after September 11, 2001, to less than 4% (3.8%) for the first time, with the lowest amount of unemployment compensation for Veterans in 17 years. Between FY11 and FY18, SFL-TAP efforts have contributed to an 82.2% decrease in total Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX) payments (\$514.6M to \$91.4M). The FY18 UCX invoice is the lowest since FY01 (\$89.8M).

We have invested a tremendous amount of resources and deliberate planning to preserve the All-Volunteer Force. People are the Army...these men and women who serve our Nation, both in uniform and out of uniform, along with their families, are our most important asset. For the Army to be ready, our Soldiers must be ready. The Army will not sacrifice readiness or quality as we continue to grow. Chairman Tillis, members of this committee, I thank you for generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian Professionals, and their Families.