

United States Air Force



Presentation

Before the Senate Armed Services
Committee, Subcommittee on Personnel

***Active, Guard, Reserve, and
Civilian Personnel Programs
in Review of the Defense
Authorization Request for
Fiscal Year 2012 and the
Future Years Defense
Program***

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Webb, Senator Graham, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to share with you information important to America's Airmen, their families and our United States Air Force. It is an honor and distinct privilege for me to join my fellow Service Senior Enlisted Advisors and represent our Nation's finest men and women.

This fiscal year, we have a programmed Total Force end strength of 702,367 which includes 332,200 active duty, 192,267 civilians, 71,200 Reserve, and 106,700 Air National Guard personnel. In the FY12 Budget, we have requested a Total Force end strength that will decrease to 693,099. While active duty end strength will only increase by 600 Airmen to 332,800, our civilian end strength will decrease by just over 10,000 to 182,199 civilians. We will also increase the Reserve end strength by 200 to 71,400 while the Air National Guard remains unchanged at 106,700.

FORCE MANAGEMENT

Fiscal constraints and 16-year record high retention rates compel the Air Force to develop voluntary and involuntary programs to manage our end strength levels. We must operate within our budget and we are committed to meeting our end strength. To do so, we have made tough decisions that will impact Airmen across the 30-year continuum of service. For new Airmen who fail to complete their initial skills training, we established a Limited Initial Skills Training process that considers these Airmen for either retention or separation based on the needs of the Air Force. We encourage voluntary separations and retirements for more seasoned Airmen by offering both limited active duty service commitment waivers and time in grade waivers. They may also voluntarily apply to complete their service commitment in the Air Reserve Component through our Palace CHASE Program or continue service in the Army through the Blue-to-Green Program.

In an effort to manage the enlisted force within authorized end strength, we are continuing the Date of Separation (DOS) Rollback Program. This initiative separates Airmen early who have already chosen to transition from the Air Force. It also provides an avenue to accelerate the removal of Airmen who possess negative quality force indicators.

Our force management strategy is not a quick fix, but a tailored, multi-year effect designed to manage the force along a 30-year continuum of service.

ACCESSIONS

We must protect accessions while taking care of our people as the impact of under-accessing Airmen is felt for the next 20 years. As previously mentioned, our force management efforts

include reducing accessions. Although below desired sustainment levels, reductions are manageable within the short and long-term health of the force. For FY11, this included 2,135 enlisted accession reductions and 439 officer reductions. In FY12, our reductions are deeper. Enlisted accession reductions are set at 2,407 while officer reductions are set at 639.

RECRUITING, RETENTION, BONUSES, AND INCENTIVE PAYS

America deserves the very best Air Force in the world, and it takes recruiting, developing, and retaining the highest quality Airmen to maintain that status. To do so, our FY12 budget request includes \$30.5B in military personnel funding, to include a 1.6 percent pay increase. Although our recruiting quality and retention levels are at the highest in 16 years, we are obligating \$630M for bonuses to recruit the right skill sets and retain experienced Airmen for today's fight and the emerging missions of tomorrow. Without these funds we will handicap our commanders in their ability to efficiently and effectively carry out the full range of missions America demands of its Air Force.

Air Force recruiting continues to need high quality recruits, even during periods of high retention. Higher quality recruits increase the probability of success during their initial training. Basic Military Training attrition went from a high of 10.7 percent in FY07 down to 6.8 percent in FY10 due to higher caliber recruits. Additionally, as a Service, we need a continuing flow of high quality recruits to fill entry-level positions as current Airmen progress into advanced positions and eventually separate or retire. Continued support for maintaining high quality now will allow the Air Force to compete for the best and brightest along a broad spectrum, especially when unemployment improves and current retention returns to normal levels.

The Air National Guard (ANG) is focusing its recruiting efforts on precision recruiting to existing vacancies. The ANG is currently projecting to be at or near its authorized end strength of 106,700 at the end of FY11.

The Air Force Reserve uses its bonus program to meet the demand for critical skills deemed vital to Air Force Reserve mission. Its bonus program has been pivotal to recruiting and retaining the right people to meet Combatant Commander requirements. Development of these skills usually requires long training courses. Members with these skills are normally in high demand within the private sector. With continued funding, the Reserve will be able to offer the appropriate combination of bonuses for enlistment, reenlistment, affiliation and health professionals. Current indications illustrate the bonus program is positively benefitting recruiting and retention.

The Air Force has a relatively small budget for recruiting special skills into the service. On the enlisted side, these skills range from ground and airborne cryptologic language analyst; combat

control; tactical air control party; survival, evasion, resistance, and escape; pararescue; special operations weather; and explosive ordnance disposal.

A 16-year high in active duty enlisted retention has necessitated moderate reductions in accessions and additional force management actions including rollbacks of Dates of Separation (DOS), separations for initial skills training failures, waivers for active duty service commitments, time-in-grade requirements and enlistment contracts which will continue through FY12. Without these actions in FY10, our overall retention would have exceeded the goal by more than 4 percent. The Air Force finished FY10 at 100 percent of its retention goal in Zone A, 17 months through 6 years of service (YOS), exceeded the goal in Zone B, 6 YOS through 10 YOS at 109 percent, and was under its retention goal in Zone C, 10 YOS through 14 YOS at 93 percent. Based on current economic forecasting, the Air Force is expected to experience consistent retention rates over the next few years.

Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRB) are our most effective, responsive and measurable tool for targeted retention. The FY12 budget for new SRB contracts does change from FY11's budget of \$145.9M as we expect to offer SRBs to fewer than 90 enlisted specialties in FY12.

The Air Force uses Cumulative Continuation Rates (CCR) to track retention by AFSC and by reenlistment zones. The CCR shows the expected rate an Airman is likely to remain in the service from year-to-year or zone-to-zone. SRBs are also an effective tool for addressing targeted retention by AFSC and by zone. In FY09, SRB costs were \$227.6M of the total Air Force budget of which \$70.4M were comprised of anniversary payments, \$156M in new bonuses, and \$1.2M in accelerated payments. Conversely, in FY10 funding for new bonuses fell from \$156M to \$141M and fell even further in FY11 and is now down to \$129.9M. Currently, 89 AFSCs are receiving SRBs in FY11.

Our Service will continue to experience high retention through FY12 and likely into FY13. However, we must still overcome several skill imbalances as a result of previous actions to reduce end strength by deliberately under-accessing in FY05 and building larger AFSCs for new and emerging mission sets. Additionally, the Air Force will continue using CSRBs and SRBs to manage retention and address shortfalls in critical skills and levels of skill in various AFSCs while also implementing force management tools to target losses in overage skill sets as we appropriately shape the force.

DIVERSITY

In a nation where only 25 percent of our youth are eligible to serve in an all-volunteer military, it is necessary to maintain a diverse Air Force to overcome today's increasingly complex challenges.

In the fall of 2010, we published strategic guidance to include a diversity policy directive and Diversity Roadmap, which provides priorities, goals and specific actions for implementation of diversity initiatives. Formalizing the Diversity Roadmap into an Air Force Instruction will provide the Total Force its final piece of strategic guidance. Woven into the instruction will be vetted recommendations of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission. We anticipate completion of the instruction by the end of September 2011.

We furthered the institutionalization of diversity by holding the inaugural Diversity Senior Working Group in October 2010. Showcasing senior leader commitment, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force, in addition to sixty senior leaders from the major commands and the Pentagon participated. Participants were challenged to promote diversity within their sphere of influence. For example, leaders can make diversity a personal commitment by participating in two outreach events per year, adding a diversity message in speeches, identifying key positions and implementing hiring practices with a diversity lens, analyzing mentoring programs and determining how to resource diversity within the major commands and wings.

HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY

Deliberately developing Airmen is a key focus area. Our Airmen must have the right mix of skills so the Air Force can continue providing combat-ready, expeditionary forces to combatant commanders now and in the future.

The Air Force is focused on providing the right expeditionary combat skills needed for our Airmen to fly, fight and win. It is critical that our Airmen have the experience, education and training to think with a global perspective and operate in an expeditionary environment.

Airmen must be specifically trained, educated, and experienced through professional development initiatives designed to create the capabilities and capture current and future mission demands. We implemented several new initiatives to enhance the development of our Airmen focusing on their experience, education and training to ensure they are prepared to fill current and future leadership positions. Central to our efforts is the shift to assigning the most “qualified” Airman versus the most “eligible” Airman for our key billets.

Our new approach to managing enlisted talent gives us the capability to evaluate Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) and select the right Airmen for critical jobs, while also ensuring they are vectored in the proper career sequence and that we are preparing them for future leadership roles. This new approach, coupled with our new special experience identifier tracking codes, give our assignment teams the tools to identify Airmen with the requisite training and experience for key positions.

We start by focusing our attention on the Air Force's No. 1 priority – Nuclear Enterprise. Our 2W2 (Nuclear Weapons Maintenance) and 21M (Munitions, Missile Maintenance) career fields have developed prioritization lists to ensure we assign the most qualified Airmen to positions by order of importance within the Nuclear Enterprise.

CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE

The Air Force continues to strengthen the nuclear enterprise, placing increased focus on ensuring the nuclear deterrence mission is executed with precision and reliability every single day. Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley, Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton A. Schwartz and I have all visited the nuclear missile fields. We had the opportunity to speak with the amazing Airmen who provide the same round-the-clock nuclear deterrence as their predecessors have for over 50 years. These Airmen are working diligently to achieve the standard of perfection the nuclear mission demands and the American public expects.

I'm happy to report that Air Force Global Strike Command reached Full Operational Capable status in September 2010. This change provides the needed oversight and advocacy of the Air Force's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and nuclear-capable bomber forces.

The demand of the nuclear mission requires discipline and compliance with the highest standards. It is imperative that Airmen at every level are focused on upholding our core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in All We Do.

AIRMEN IN THE JOINT AND COALITION FIGHT

More than 94,400 Total Force Airmen are currently forward stationed or deployed worldwide supporting combatant commanders. Another 133,000 provide daily strategic mobility, space and missile capabilities, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to joint warfighters. In all, 42 percent of the Total Force directly supports combatant commander requirements every day.

Almost 29,000 Airmen are deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations, with more than 3,700 filling joint expeditionary taskings. Airmen are on the frontlines with their fellow Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in roles such as detainee operations, convoy employment and protection, explosive ordnance disposal, police training teams, military transition teams, civil engineering, security, communications, fuels, medical services, logistics, intelligence, and base operating support. They are part of the joint team, serving in whatever capacity needed by the combatant commander. Together with our sister services, we are training and augmenting both Iraqi and Afghan security forces, rebuilding critical infrastructure, and providing medical services to these war-torn countries.

Our remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) platforms continue to increase the support to joint and coalition warfighters on the ground. Airmen are finding, tracking and attacking our enemies using Air Force Predators, Reapers and Global Hawk RPA aircraft. Our Predator operations alone have increased from 12 combat air patrols in 2007 to 48 today to support combatant commanders and warfighters. By growing the number of RPA operators and increasing the number of combat air patrols to 58 by the end of fiscal 2012, we are protecting joint and coalition interests around the globe from bases within the United States.

DEPLOYMENTS

As of 1 March 2011, we have more than 38,000 deployed personnel, approximately 5,000 of which are fulfilling Joint Expeditionary Taskings working with our sister services. In order to meet the growing demands of Combatant Commanders, Air Force 179-day tours increased from 12 percent of all deployments in CY04 to 60 percent today. In October 2010, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force established the Air Force's baseline deployment tour length to be 179-days, normalizing this for all Airmen by October 2012. Still, approximately 1,800 of our deployment requirements, or 7 percent of all deployments, call for Airmen to be deployed for 365 days.

Continuing to fill both the deployed and home-station mission continues to take its toll on our units. The end-result of the new 179-day deployment standard will keep Airmen on typical deployments for an additional 60 days but will also provide them and their families more time at home between deployments. Additionally, the longer standard deployment will reduce the amount of pre-deployment training required over a career.

In total, more than 216,000 Total Force Airmen support daily Combatant Commander operations.

AIRMAN AND FAMILY RESILIENCE

Building resiliency among Airmen and their families is another key focus area. Our warriors have been in Iraq and Afghanistan for nearly 10 years and in the Middle East for over 20 years. Continued high operations tempo at home and abroad stress to us the need to deliberately increase the focus on building strong, resilient families. Resilient Airmen are better equipped to withstand, recover and/or grow in the face of stressors and changing demands, and continuously get the job done. Many of our programs are designed to continue to build resilient Airmen and families.

We are committed to strengthening the resilience of our Airmen and their families. Our goal is to improve leadership commitment toward building resilient Airmen who have the ability to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands—regardless of time, challenge, or location.

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM (EFMP)

The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is how we assist Airmen and their families who have special needs, balancing mission requirements with family care responsibilities. We continue to focus attention this year on supporting our 17,000 Airmen with exceptional family members.

Two facets of EFMP are assignments, managed through the Air Force Personnel Center and Special Needs Identification and Assignment Coordination, administered by the Air Force Medical Service. We recently added a third element, EFMP-Family Support, which provides information and referral services available in the base and local community.

These Airmen and their families require more comprehensive support beyond the identification and assignment process. To address this gap, we have designated a staff member from the Airman & Family Readiness Center at each installation to provide information, referral and assistance to families with special needs. We have hired additional staff at 35 installations with 175 or more special needs families to provide targeted focus on family member support. Additionally, to improve on the coordination of care for high-risk families, the Air Force will add 36 active duty social work billets beginning in FY12. Furthermore, we have increased our communication and marketing efforts at our Airman & Family Readiness Centers and Medical Treatment Facilities to ensure Airmen and families are aware of the enhanced resources available to them.

QUALITY OF LIFE

We thank the Congress for its steadfast funding for quality of life initiatives. We look forward to continued support to enable us to retain skilled Airmen and develop them into the leaders we need for the future.

The quality of life Airmen and their families receive is an overwhelming factor in how long they will serve. During the Year of the Air Force Family (YoAFF), we focused on four main pillars: health and wellness; Airmen and family support; education, development and employment; and Airmen and family housing. Among the many initiatives resulting from the YoAFF, we implemented the Family Health Initiative at 32 Medical Treatment Facilities, convened a Single Airman Summit in April 2010, provided each installation funding to support spouse employment programs, and developed the Building Thriving Housing Communities Strategy.

Whether working on the installation or deployed fighting the Nation's wars, our Airmen deserve buildings and facilities of a high standard commensurate with the outstanding service they provide their country. Since 2000, and with the very generous support of Congress, the Air Force funded many military construction projects for child development centers, youth centers

and fitness centers. While this represents a significant investment by the Air Force, many requirements remain.

Our fitness centers continue to be an important on-base facility where Airmen and their families gather to participate in numerous activities that help to improve their overall health and build strong, resilient families. The Air Force has funded dozens of fitness center projects over the last 10 years. These projects have included add-ons to existing centers and replacing old and undersized facilities. With your continued funding support, we hope to construct and expand our facilities to meet the needs of our Airmen and their families.

Last year, we transformed the way the Air Force delivers food service. We focused on a campus-style food service for Airmen and their families while improving efficiency and providing significant savings. Our food transformation initiative addresses changing lifestyles, needs and preferences while improving program and facility standards. This initiative offers a variety of healthy options while keeping our warfighting capabilities at the forefront. The transformation was implemented at six bases, where operating hours increased while costs decreased an estimated 27 percent. Since the initiative began, the customer count is up 22 percent and satisfaction has increased 8 percent.

WOUNDED WARRIOR AND SURVIVOR CARE

We remain fully committed to caring for our brave Airmen who are wounded in battle, who contract serious illnesses or are injured while defending the nation's freedoms. We also recognize the importance of family to the healing process and continue to embrace the families of our brave men and women in uniform. The Air Force continues to provide non-medical case management, support, and assistance through the Air Force Survivor Assistance Program, the Recovery Care Program, and the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program – and will do so for as long as needed in partnership with our medical community. With your support, our Warrior and Survivor Care programs continue to prosper. As of March 31, 2011, we have 1,008 Air Force members enrolled in the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program. In keeping pace with our growing Wounded Warrior population, the Air Force has hired 33 Recovery Care Coordinators to support 31 locations across the Air Force. We have also increased our Air Force Wounded Warrior Program consultants from 12 to 21 positions.

Our Family Liaison Officers, Recovery Care Coordinators, Air Force Wounded Warrior Program consultants, and Community Readiness Consultants provide immediate and direct care for our Airmen and their families through recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration. Our partnerships with the Department of Defense and the Veteran Affairs are improving opportunities for our Airmen to continue as active duty Airmen or as civilians within the Air Force and Department of

Defense. These partnerships support education and employment opportunities geared toward successful reintegration within the civilian communities.

Once again, we will celebrate the achievements of our Wounded Warriors during the 2011 Warrior Games scheduled for May 17 – 21, 2011 at the Olympic Training Center and United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Warrior Games provide a focal point for our recovering Airmen to incorporate athletics back into their day-to-day lives by preparing them mentally and physically to get back to their military service.

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

The Air Force has engaged an aggressive and proactive approach to track Airmen who may have post-traumatic stress (PTS) symptoms or a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Airmen learn about PTS, TBI and other deployment-related health issues through education programs both before and after they deploy.

In addition to training, Airmen are also screened for TBI before and after deployment. Airmen receive a computerized assessment that measures cognitive abilities including reaction time and memory. The member is reassessed in theater if they sustain a head injury. Scores are compared with baseline in order to aid with return-to-duty determinations, in conjunction with a clinical assessment.

Airmen who receive help for deployment-related stress also have the option to receive treatment through primary care channels as the Air Force increases the mental health presence within the primary care setting. At this time, 57 percent of Air Force medical treatment facilities have integrated behavioral health services into primary care clinics. This program enables Airmen to feel more comfortable seeking behavioral health assistance.

Airmen with common symptoms including sleep, energy, mood, or concentration difficulties simply see their primary care manager, just as they would for any other treatment. The primary care manager then refers the servicemember to the behavioral health consultant who can provide screening, education and focused intervention in the primary care clinic. This process helps to normalize minor behavioral health treatment alongside other, more routine care. The goal is to reduce the stigma behind seeing a provider for stress, helping Airmen feel less isolated and more willing to ask for help.

KEY SPOUSE PROGRAM

The Key Spouse Program is an effective way to communicate with family members and is akin to the Navy Ombudsman Program and the Army Family Readiness Group. We aim to bridge the

gap between the military spouse and the military chain of command to help build a greater sense of community within units, especially where families are separated or deployed.

Currently, 97 percent of units have trained Key Spouses, and we have more than 4,121 trained volunteers. We hope increased emphasis and continued standardization will make this program become even more helpful.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

Spouse employment in the military is a constant challenge for our military families. Overall, 48 percent of Air Force spouses seek employment with each military move. For our junior Airmen, the added income is often a large part of the quality of life their family enjoys. Military spouses report that their work income constitutes about 48 percent of total family income.

We appreciate your support and the Administration's effort to strengthen our military families by removing barriers that currently prevent military spouses from maintaining a career or employment because of relocation.

This support helps ensure our family members have access to careers and are not adversely affected when our service calls upon us to relocate.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

When states support unemployment compensation, this also allows spouses to take reasonable time to find suitable employment at the new location as well as resources necessary to obtain any new licensing or credential requirements. Currently, 38 states plus the District of Columbia provide unemployment compensation to spouses who leave because of a military move, nearly triple the number since 2004. We remain hopeful the remaining states, despite the current challenging fiscal environment, can provide similar compensation benefits to improve the employment outlook of military spouses.

One of the greatest challenges facing our nation right now is unemployment and underemployment, and we remain especially concerned about the challenges facing those in the Guard and Reserve or those leaving active military service as they look for work.

Although the national unemployment rate was 8.9 percent in February 2011, the unemployment rate for the younger segments of the workforce, which includes those veterans who joined the military after September 11, 2001, remains elevated. As a result, we are committed to assisting our separating members in making a successful transition to employment in the civilian workforce and in encouraging their continuing education through the use of the post-9/11 GI Bill."

CHILD CARE

Child care continues to be an important quality of life factor for our Airmen and their families. Quality child care facilities are a key component in assuring Airmen that their family is being cared for while they defend our country. With your continued support, we are striving to eliminate our shortfall in child development center spaces by the end of fiscal 2012. While we have addressed the facilities and personnel needed, we are still trying to fund supplies and equipment.

Our child care programs also include Reservists and Air National Guardsmen by providing child care during scheduled drill weekends and a child care subsidy when activated. While we face funding challenges in meeting every child care requirement, we are striving to provide quality child care options to all our Airmen.

EDUCATION FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Military life, frequent moves and extended separation during deployments present a host of challenges for our families. Nearly half of all service members are married and have children. Consequently, military families often weigh assignment decisions based on the quality of education from the local school systems for their children.

Thirty-five states have passed legislation to establish an Interstate Compact On Educational Opportunity For Military Children to address educational solutions at the state, local, and school district levels. These compact states are working to solve issues dealing with class placement, records transfer, graduation requirements, immunizations, exit testing and allowing late entry to extra-curricular activities and sports teams. Another eight states (MT, WY, NE, MD, VT, PA, NY and WV) have proposed their respective bills, and the final six states and the District of Columbia (OR, AR, WI, GA, NH, ME and DC) have indicated this issue is a "priority." The Interstate Compact ensures children in military families are not penalized in school for their families' service to the Nation.

We are making great strides in support for Air Force-connected students attending public, private, DoD Dependent Schools, home and virtual schools. Currently 84 Air Force bases have civilian school liaison officer positions. In addition, staff in the Airman and Family Readiness Centers provide school liaison support to leadership and families. Major commands and installations continue to work creative initiatives such as providing webcasts of graduations so parents can share these occasions while deployed. Additionally, a senior military officer or DoD civilian has been designated at each installation to advocate with local and state school administration and school boards for the interest of Air Force families.

AIRMEN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

The U.S. Air Force enlisted force is highly educated. Since April 25, 1977, more than 303,500 Airmen have earned a fully accredited associate degree, corresponding to their career field, through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). In fact, about 153,000 of our enlisted Airmen have at least 12 college credits; of that more than 51,500 have associates degrees, almost 18,000 have bachelor's degrees or higher and 18 have earned their doctorate degrees.

The General Education Mobile program is making education more accessible for our Airmen. This program offers general education courses required for a CCAF degree through distance learning courses. This program is intended to attract those students who are struggling to get their general education credits filled because of numerous reasons, primarily the Air Force's high operations tempo. There are 26 participating schools offering 511 courses of which over 700 Airmen are enrolled.

Our Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative program is helping CCAF graduates apply credits toward a bachelor's degree at military-friendly schools. This program has grown to 44 civilian higher-education institutions and offers 219 bachelor's degree programs. These institutions take an Airman's CCAF credits and apply them toward a bachelor's degree. More than 17,000 Airmen are participating in the program, and since its inception in June 2007, 464 bachelor's degrees have been awarded.

We've also had an overwhelming number of Airmen who have transferred their G.I. Bill benefits to their dependents. This benefit helps families, and it also helps the Air Force retain our Airmen through the associated service commitment. We continue to recruit and retain Airmen who value educational opportunities for themselves and their families.

CCAF also offers a Professional Manager Certification, a credential award that formally recognizes an individual's advanced level of education and experience in leadership and management, as well as professional accomplishments. The program provides a structured professional development track that supplements Enlisted Professional Military Education and the Career Field Education and Training Plan.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response remains a top priority as we work toward providing safe environments for our Airmen and families to work and live. We are focused on instilling a prevention-based program so these sexual offenses cannot and do not occur.

As part of our approach, consistent top-down messaging is critical. These messages continue to emphasize Air Force Core Values and the need for active Wingmen watching out for one another. Likewise, we have spent the last year building community empowerment through bystander intervention education. We provide training that ensures Airmen understand when

to act if they observe behaviors or actions that may lead to sexual assault. An additional prevention effort includes the development of a risk reduction guide which will be provided to senior commanders by fall of this year to assist them in providing safe environments.

As a service, from our most senior leaders to our newest Airmen, we remain committed to a zero-tolerance standard of sexual assault.

CONCLUSION

Our Airmen are doing incredible work, ranging from providing humanitarian aid to the Japan earthquake and tsunami victims for Operation Tomodachi to supporting recent NATO operations in Libya and daily U.S. Central Command missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than two-thirds of Airmen entered the Air Force after September 11, 2001, which means the majority of our force has been at war their entire careers. They deploy longer than ever before and some need a second hand to count the number of combat tours they have been on. Despite this pace, our Airmen have shown amazing resiliency.

Finally, this is a team effort and the contributions of Air Force families continue to be amazing. Our families are the ones who deal with an empty seat at the dinner table when our warfighting mission takes us away. They stand tall when extraordinary challenges attempt to knock them down. They keep the faith and their support is critical to Airmen fulfilling their mission requirements.

Thank you again for your continued support of our brave Airmen and their supportive families.