

**PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
UNITED STATES SENATE**

SUBJECT: Reserve Personnel

**STATEMENT OF: LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL JAMES III
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UNITED STATES SENATE**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. As we sit here today, the experienced, dedicated, and well-trained men and women of the Air National Guard are protecting the skies over our Nation as they have since 1953 when the Air National Guard began Air Sovereignty Alert. The Citizen-Airmen of the Air National Guard are serving at home and around the globe in both flying and support missions. The Air National Guard provided almost one-third of the fighter sorties for Operation Enduring Freedom, and one-third of the fighter and aerial refueling tanker sorties in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since fiscal year 2004, Air National Guard aircrews have supported 75-percent of the tanker sorties and 60-percent of the airlift sorties worldwide. And the Air National Guard is not providing just aircraft and aircrews. Air National Guard Expeditionary Combat Support units and individuals are supporting operations and exercises around the world. Since 9/11, more than two-thirds of our Citizen-Airmen have participated in operations worldwide, most as volunteers. Today, Air Guard men and women, including chaplains, medical personnel, lawyers, finance specialists, security forces, weather forecasters, communications experts, and intelligence analysts are in 27 countries from Columbia to Iceland to Kyrgyzstan to Japan.

It is not just the Citizen-Airmen that deserve our praise and thanks. The men and women on the frontline of our Nation's defense require support from the home-front – their families, employers, and communities. As the Airmen of the Air National Guard answer their Nation's call, their families are fighting the many small "battles" at home so their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, and sisters can focus on their jobs defending the United States. We must also thank the employers and communities for stepping up to the plate by providing emotional, spiritual, financial and employment security that often exceeds our expectations. My thanks to Congress for providing the support and the resources to take care of our Citizen-Airmen and their families. In the end, it is the families, employers, communities, and Congress that have made it possible for our Air National Guard members to concentrate on their number one job, defending the homeland in-depth.

The Air National Guard is determined to remain Ready, Reliable, Relevant... Now and in the Future. Air National Guard F-15 and F-16 pilots who are protecting the skies over U.S. do not do it alone. They

require a team of dedicated professionals. Likewise, they need your help preparing for their future.

The transformation of our force and transition to different missions will provide the Air Guard with many opportunities to excel; we will be asking our members to move to new locations, cross-train into different Air Force specialties, and in some cases, work side-by-side with their Total Force counterparts. This transformation is essential for the Air National Guard as we capitalize on the strengths of the Total Force to relieve some of the stresses that have recently begun to affect our force. Many of those stresses are the result of a high operational tempo and a capabilities mix designed to meet the challenges of the Cold War era. These factors will challenge the key to the Air National Guard's success -- its people.

As the Air National Guard transforms, we will be looking for personnel transitional benefits to help shape our force and ensure our people are treated fairly.

Like all the Military Services, we depend upon well-trained, dedicated professionals, but the core competency of the Air National Guard is its experienced people. In 2003, 52% of the men and women entering the Air National Guard had prior military service and approximately 62% of the enlisted members were rated as skill level 7 or higher. Our ability to recruit and retain this technically competent, stable work force is essential. While recruiting has trended downward, specifically in non-prior service Airmen, I'm proud to say that the retention of our members remains the best of all the services and components. How well we assume new missions and continue to support both the Air and Space Expeditionary Force and Homeland Defense is directly related to our achieving recruiting and retention goals through fiscal year 2006.

Heading into FY06, the Air Guard needs to continue to keep stride with all services in the very competitive recruiting market. As we begin to transform our force, we will be competing for people from the same demographic pool. There are several programs that I feel would greatly improve the Air National Guard's ability to recruit and retain quality people. First, the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act

increased the Reenlistment and Prior Service Bonus amounts. We would like to continue to utilize these incentives.

Second, increased funding for marketing and advertising is considered imperative for recruiting of non-prior service personnel and would include establishing a visible presence in our communities through storefront recruiting offices and targeted advertising.

Our people are and will remain our most valuable asset, but the future requires that we also transform our organizations and modernize our equipment. As we begin to transform ourselves through the addition of different missions and participation in the Total Force, we will continue to maintain a majority of the missions that we have today.

The men and women of the Air National Guard understand these 21st century security challenges require a 21st century Air National Guard. We will continue to be an integral part of the Air Force's Air & Space Expeditionary Force and Homeland Defense teams. Our partnership with our Active and Reserve counterparts, and their partnership with us, aligns our forces to participate in some of the leading edge

missions. Several initiatives are underway, and we have already seen positive results and increased capability from previous Total Force initiatives.

Our men and women understand the need for new transformational organizational structures such as the association of the 192nd Fighter Wing of the Virginia National Guard with the active component's 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base forming the first operational F/A-22 wing. The door also swings the other way as we embark on a test of "Community Basing" with the Vermont Air National Guard hosting active duty maintenance personnel thus capitalizing upon the Air National Guard's core competency of experience. Additionally, the Air National Guard is transforming by embracing new missions such as Global Hawk, space, intelligence operations, and Predator.

We realize major changes are in store for our Air National Guard forces. We feel, however, the key to our support to the warfighter is to maintain proportionality within many of the current and emerging mission areas. We will continue to seek a capabilities mix mirroring the active Air Force to ensure the Air Guard maintains a proportional

presence across the full spectrum of Air Force missions.

Proportionality also allows us to capture highly technical skills from the active force that are still desperately needed by the Combatant Commanders and continuing to provide a surge capability across all mission areas.

Finally, I wish to address the Air National Guard's role in our nation's top priority mission – Homeland Defense. Our approach is “One System – Two Missions.” Be it aircraft, Expeditionary Medical Support, hazardous material response, disaster preparedness, chemical and biological detection equipment, or a myriad of other capabilities resident in the Air & Space Expeditionary Forces of the Air National Guard.

To quote President Lincoln, “The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.” How well we address today the challenges of recruiting, retention, transformation, and modernization will affect our capability to defend our homeland tomorrow.

Thank you.