

STATEMENT BY

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL JAMES III
DIRECTOR, AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SUBJECT: Recruiting & Retention

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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Mr Chairman, members of the committee. I wish to thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about the future of the Air National Guard. Since its inception in 1947, the Air National Guard and its Citizen-Airmen have worked hard to ensure the Air National Guard is Ready, Reliable, and Relevant to the needs of our nation and the states and territories of the United States.

It is has been another exceptional year for the Air National Guard. For fiscal year 2005, Air National Guard crews have flown well over 50 percent of the fighter, tanker and airlift sorties for Operation Noble Eagle while postured for Air Sovereignty Alert at 16 of 17 sites; provided almost one-third of the tanker and airlift sorties in Operation Enduring Freedom; and provided over two-thirds of the fighter sorties for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Air National Guard crews also supported 75 percent of the tanker sorties and over 60 percent of the airlift sorties to other theaters.

Air National Guard members could not participate at these levels without continued support from Congress and the American people. The Air National Guard will continue to perform these homeland defense and expeditionary missions even as our organization transforms to meet future requirements.

Through our VANGUARD strategy we will continue to work with Air Force leadership to achieve the right mix of forces across the full spectrum of operations: community, state and national leaders can be sure the Air National Guard will remain Ready, Reliable, and Relevant... now and in the future!

Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention programs play a vital role in supporting our Homeland Defense mission and our successful transformation to the future, and they are the driving factors as to how well we support the warfighter. The Air National Guard's success is rooted in the quality of our recruits and our ability to retain them —

our people are unequivocally our most valued resource. It is critical that we continue to attract the quality personnel and retain current members as we transform our force and transition to different missions.

Recruiting and retention remain a top priority as we proceed through fiscal year 2005. Today the Air National Guard is 99.3% of its authorized strength, and while we face some challenges, we expect to meet our end of the year recruiting goals. The Air National Guard retention rate through June 2005 is 92.5%, exceeding our 2005 goal of 91.7%.

While retention remains high, recruiting has met with some success and a few challenges. Through June 2005, the Air National Guard has achieved 84% of its end of the year recruiting goals. Our biggest challenge has been the non-prior service recruiting market. Recruiting in this area lags behind at 72% of our end of the year goals.

The non-prior service market is the focus of our recruiting efforts for fiscal years 05 and 06. Our advertising to this market through radio, theatre, print media and the Air National Guard web page will undoubtedly enhance recruiting for us. While those new programs are successful, we are continuing our traditional recruiting strategies in the high schools, vocational technical schools, colleges, the local malls and events that attract men and women in the new recruit areas. Additionally, we have increased our presence in our communities via storefront recruiting offices.

While the non-prior service market is our top priority, we also continue to emphasize recruiting in the prior service market. Our focus in this area allows us to retain critical skills lost to the active component and save valuable training dollars. Through the use of our thirteen In-Service Air National Guard recruiters strategically placed at active duty bases, the Air National Guard has garnered approximately 2,000 fully qualified and trained members this fiscal year alone.

Provisions of the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act provide enhanced authority for bonus programs and we will continue to work with available resources to accomplish our mission. Our ability to achieve recruiting and retention goals through fiscal year 2006 will undoubtedly be linked to these critical incentive programs.

The men and women of the Air National Guard thank you for the cooperation and support you have provided in the past and look forward to working with you as we meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you.